

CASTANETS



Carlos Reyles




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CHAPTER ONE

THE CLOSE, dense atmosphere in the *Tronío*, a café offering a nightly programme of popular dance and song, was heavy with a scent of carnations and sherry. . .

The word *tronío* rings with a triumphant sonority in the Andalusian ear. It is as absolute in your native's philosophy as the ten categories in Aristotle's philosophy; it is an equation of his will, the sum of his desire; it is the synthesis of power, pomp, and magnificence. It holds all the suggestion of the Napoleonic N, that lightning-bolt between folded wings.

Perhaps the fact that the leading café of Seville was shrewdly christened *Tronío* may explain why it is held in such high esteem and why it is invariably filled with people. Sometimes in the evening, the cigar-smoke is so thick you could cut it with a knife! The whole room looks as though it had been steeped in absinthe. As the dancers strike the *tablao*, or stage, with their feet, a thin dust rises and floats lazily upwards towards the ceiling, taking on a golden tinge by the light of

the gas-jets, whose yellow chlorotic flames quiver like a human heart to the raucous hum of the guitars and voices, now wanton, now moaning the *cante hondo* — that purest essence of Andalusian song, that safety-valve through which all the violence, fanaticism, cruelty, and sensuality still in the race of Pedro the Cruel and Philip II find their outlet on Andalusian soil.

The establishment's daily customers occupy the choicest tables. Without stopping to ask them, the waiters serve cups of steaming coffee and the inevitable pony of *Cazalla*, of *Rute*, or of *Chinchón*. Your good *Sevillano* sets his elbows on the yellowish marble-topped table, and, his toothpick in his mouth, his Cordoban felt on a level with his eyes or crammed back over the nape of his neck, he converses about bulls, feats of prowess, and love; nor does he fail to heighten his narrative by gestures and by a play of facial expression to which the constant ebullition of a blood perennially young gives an appearance of exaggeration. Oaths and laughter ring across the room; fists strike tables with an emphatic bang; there is a great clatter of chairs scraping over the floor. But no one pays the slightest attention; noise is perforce the rule, considering what people make up the audience. Here are touches Quevedo might have painted, there the strokes of a Velazquez, yonder subjects for Goya abound. In the *Tronío*, you see hosts of matadors and apprentice bullfighters with their pigtails; women

from the Macarena quarter, with curled, shining hair; clean-shaven faces from the slaughter-house; bullies from Triana, lads from the slums of la Cava, as shrewd and wily as the legendary heroes of picaresque literature; workmen who, to the detriment of the family supper, come here to squander their pay for a day's work high on a scaffolding or in the depths of a workshop; here and there a *señorito*, superb in manner and appearance; as well as a goodly number of tradesmen, farmers, cattle-dealers, all clean, well-dressed, circumspect men, connoisseurs of good coffee and good *cante*, taking their enjoyment with an almost religious unction. These solemn gentlemen do not burst out into joyous cries of *Olé* as the singers intone the first notes of their songs; they never applaud the dancers or invite the artists to drink a *manzanilla* with them when the latter come down from the stage and invade the hall, sitting at friends' tables to encourage the sale of liquor during the intermissions. They smile at them as they pass, and, with a change of expression as complete as though they had donned masks, they plunge into talk about the rise and fall of oil, the gratifying or heartrending prospects of future harvests, the ailments of those "cursed pigs," the forthcoming fairs at Mairena, Carmona, or Utrera. These are grave, important men; their demeanor suggests matters duly brought to their appointed end; they seem like people whose course is as firmly embedded in the necessary

and the useful as rocks in the earth. Compared with them, other men are but so many grains of sand, the sport of the winds.

The *Tronío* is not only the Mecca of dance, music, and popular song, a place where the ancient traditions of the *cante* are preserved and where new channels are sought for their expression; it is also a sort of Exchange where the value of bullfighter or stage artist is quoted and where deals in wine, olives, asses, and livestock are likewise negotiated between a song and a round of drinks. Promoters of bullfights sign many a contract here. Horse-dealers, traders in grain and oil, even financiers and usurers conduct their business here, each seated at his own table; in the course of the day, people of all sorts and conditions move in and out noisily, later to spread the economic and artistic influence of the café throughout Seville, and, indeed, throughout a goodish part of Spain.

The café occupies a very old building; its tiled roof is covered with moss and dandelions; its balconies are of iron and its wide patio, of white marble, is ornamented with *azulejos*—earthenware tiles enamelled in vivid colors—and columns with Moorish capitals. A tiny basin, also in marble and surrounded with flowerpots, gleams in the centre of the patio. A thin, graceful stream of water spurts from the basin in a jet little more than a yard high, to fall again like a rain of diamonds into the resonant basin. In winter

the light shines through a skylight of colored glass which is left open in summer, during the fiery heat of the dog-days, when a great cover of Jerez canvas is spread across it. Thus the patio is bright and warm during the cold season, cool and sheltered during the hot. And in the wide court, with walls rough-plastered and whitewashed; in the passages formed by the high galleries above; on the *tablao* and in the bar, art and commerce ogle and abet one another in brilliant contrast.

Tables occupy the rest of the wide space. Private rooms, on the first floor, take up a part of the gallery, which is laid out somewhat like a tier of loges. From here, the spectator may view both the play and the people in the house, unseen. There are two approaches to these private rooms, (a paradise for beggar or gamin): one is up the main stairway in one corner of the patio; the other up a hidden stairway with a private entrance, in the rear of the building, opening out into a dark and extremely narrow alley. When the programme in the café is over, merrymaking begins in the private rooms. The women of the establishment go up by the main stairway. Others who have come from the street, alone or in company, do likewise. But a pretty gipsy girl or some mysterious beauty, holding her skirt up, her face buried deep in the folds of shawl or mantilla, steals up the narrow staircase in the rear; you catch a glimpse of a houri's eyes, of fingers cov-

ered with rings, of feet arched and strained, as it were, to dart the arrow of desire.

An obsequious waiter shows her into one of the private rooms. She installs herself and, with a sigh, proffers the usual question:

"Isn't that bandit here yet?"

"Not yet, but don't worry! He'll be here soon."

"How do you know? Did you see him?"

"My heart tells me he will," the rascal answers, his eyes dancing. Then he disappears, to return with a tray of glasses and a few dainties — olives, anchovies, or shrimps. . .

The house is full, not a table to be had anywhere; the little loges are thronged. The women wear flowers in their hair, the men have put on wide-brimmed hats and holiday clothes. Here and there a Manilla shawl of dazzling colors affords a gay and joyous touch. Filligreed gold, diamonds, old seals, and heavy fobs gleams on shirtfront and waistcoat. It is Easter Eve, Christ is risen from the dead and the good people of Seville are making ready to drown in wine and pleasure the supposed abstinences and sorrows of Holy Week. After the tragic mood of the Passion, the joy of life sparkles once again. Fairs, bullfights, and *tangos* succeed the solemn masses, the processions and the *saetas*, arrows of song, lyrical orisons in praise of the Holy Images as they file by. The time for weeping is at an end; it yields to the season of irrepressible

laughter, to a frenzied pursuit of joy now in wine, desire, and life, now in blood and death. The thirsty crowds throng in cafés, taverns, and wine-shops. Some seek the oblivion of wine, others the wine of oblivion. Like its poet, Seville enjoys its melancholy, finds sadness in its cups. Sorrow lies at the bottom of the glass, and there is always the glass in time of sorrow. Let us drink, let us drink and be merry. On these days, the sun beats down on the white walls, blazes on the roofs; *manzanilla* flows in torrents; the windows are gay with flowers, the houses sing, the women leave behind them trails of fragrance as they pass. Flower and song burst forth in the patios; kisses blossom on the lips of young girls. The evenings are lyrical with the talk of lovers leaning against grilled windows. Spring, laden with songs and perfumes, soars from garden, orchard, and field. It peoples the sordid alleys and sombre hovels with gaiety; its magic transmutes ugliness and wretchedness into splendor and grace. The indigo of the sky turns to intense cobalt. The *azulejos* flash brilliantly in the sun. Light decks the Giralda in robes of fire and blood; it refurbishes the dead tones of the Tower of Gold and of the Alcázar; it makes of the brown Guadalquivir a river of quicksilver. Drunk with sunshine, the people move to and fro endlessly down the sonorous streets. They laugh and jest; they challenge the young women as they pass, their starched skirts swish-

ing, their shawls to windward, trailing clouds of glory behind them; they crowd into the taverns.

EVERY year during the *Feria*, the *Tronío* doubled the number of its tables and strengthened its programme with certain headliners; this year, the famous *Trianera* was among them. She was making her reappearance at the café after an absence of three years. She had left Seville poor, unknown, in rags; she was returning a celebrity, covered with jewels. Rumor ran rife on the extraordinary luck that had favored her; as in the case of Lola Montes, of la belle Otero, of Anita Delgado, people cited sovereigns, rajahs, grand dukes, lords, bankers, potentates of all sorts who had showered gifts upon her. But in reality no one knew anything about her save that hers was the majesty of a queen and that she was the leading dancer of Spain. "When la *Trianera* raises her arms to heaven, seraphs float down at her call," wrote the hyperbolic chroniclers of Cádiz, of Jerez, of Málaga, even of the Capital. The clients of the *Tronío* had not forgotten the girl, still boyish in figure, who showed more than a passing knowledge of dancing the very first time she stepped on the stage, especially of such personal, intuitive movements as sprang from her heart, endowing her warm passionate art with triumphant grace and purpose.

They were impatient to see her. The appearance of

a dancer or singer of original talent could vie only with the discovery of a star bullfighter. This year, the stage attractions rivalled those of the arena, where the idol of Córdoba and the idol of Seville were to fight in turn and where Paco Quiñones, who had as yet fought only young bulls, was to receive his matador's license and pit himself against full-fledged bullfighters.

Paco Quiñones was a young aristocrat. Finding himself faced with ruin at the death of his uncle and guardian, he took to the arena much as he might have hit the highroad, armed with a rifle. His friends and relatives strove to dissuade him from so absurd a resolution; they pointed out, beyond considerations of bodily risk, what a loss of prestige the profession entailed. His only answer was that the horns of misery were no less to be feared than those of the bulls and that the greatest shame in the world was to be penniless. Paco created a furore throughout half the country as a fighter of young bulls because, instead of the conventional lunge, he would draw the bull within striking distance with his *muleta* — the red cloth held over the sword to conceal it at the kill — and without giving a single inch, plunge his sword in its neck to the hilt, thus executing a dangerous, highly difficult feat that had been forgotten since the days of the great Domínguez.

Paco had grown up among bulls. His uncle possessed a stud of wild cattle on the banks of the Guadal-

quivir. When still a mere lad, he had fought bullocks; as an adolescent, he had practised spearing and flagging young bulls with his fellow members of *Ia Garrocha* — a club named after the *garrocha* or pike used by picadors — on estates belonging to the Marquis del Saltillo and various relations and friends who bred Miuras, Murubes, and Orozcos. Everyone loved him for his frank, gay, resolute, generous, and extremely sociable character. He was a true Andalusian, without the gipsy tricks that detract from the innate charm of the race. An extraordinary tact and a familiarity with every walk of society made him a hardy fellow, a perfect aristocrat, with no failing other than an unquenchable love of the things of this world, good or bad: wine, gaming, women, horses, and bulls. He could mangle French and English; he was not uneducated, for he had travelled abroad; but for reasons both material and ideal, he never enjoyed abandoning the Sevillian milieu. For him a man was at his best only when riding an Andalusian horse or facing a bull with *muleta* and sword. His saddle horses were noble animals, superbly trained. His Moorish saddle, his cloak of Jerez, his leather leggings were the finest and most swagger in the world. And when, in the pasture-land, he felled a young bull and dismounted to work on it with his cloak, or when he fought it with cape or *muleta*, no man, not even a professional bullfighter, showed such skill and daring. Nor had

he ever taken part in the sheep-fights, presided over by young girls in mantillas and short skirts, which the youngsters of Seville organized periodically; he did not relish such ridiculous exhibitions. But for his own amusement, under an assumed name, he had fought both on foot and on horseback in village arenas. There the danger was real and Paco revelled in it. Joking and laughing all the while, he performed feats of daring at which the horses of his comrades reared. Once Paco, with a man riding on his shoulders, actually buried several darts in the bull. One day when the matadors had refused to brave the bull because of its stature and its murderous inclinations, Paco jumped from his horse, picked up the "instruments of death" and, in spite of his clumsy leg-guards, attacked the beast with his *muleta* until it stood still, breathless, gaping; then, with a masterly sword-thrust, dispatched it into the next world. It was between two members of the Town Council and escorted by a clamoring mob that he returned to his hotel. In Seville, Paco was already quite popular for feats of horsemanship and daring, for the flirtations he was credited with and for the charm of his personality. When his latest exploit was reported, his prestige grew apace. His fellow-members of La Garrocha, who knew the circumstance, thumped him on the back affectionately, saying:

"Ah, Paco, you're a grand fellow !"

And the urchins, seeing him prance down the streets of the town on his grey piebald, cried out:

"Olé los señoritos ! Hurrah for the hero !"

He greeted them all by name, threw them cigars and pursued his way without blushing or putting on the slightest airs, finding this tribute the most natural thing in the world. Although of a passionate nature, he possessed that apparent self-mastery, that jocular energy so much admired by Andalusians, and, contrary to the usual custom, he never vented it in braggadocio. He took things as they came, with a wholly Mahometan acceptance of his fate, without bother or worry. But when he had to make a decision, he did not hesitate to face the issue.

"You cannot escape the blows of fortune or bulls by turning your back and taking to your heels; you must wait for them and stand up to them," he was wont to declare. Thus when his uncle's executors showed him, document by document, how that excellent man had not only squandered his own fortune but also that which his sister, Paco's mother, had entrusted to him; when, further, they intimated that they would have to sell the property to pay the creditors and save a meagre capital, he did not falter. For answer, he offered them a glass of wine. After having drained his own, he lit a cigarette, blew out a thick cloud of blue smoke and said calmly:

"I knew we were very deep in debt, but I never

dreamed we were faced with ruin. Very well, I make no objection. You may sell the farms, the stock, and all you please, but not the house; I intend to keep it. We were born here, Rosarito and I; we shall only leave it feet foremost."

"But look here, my lad," one of the grave gentlemen observed, "how will you manage to keep up the house, when you have barely enough left to save it?"

"That is *my* business," he answered with a smile. "The great Cúcharés used to say that every bull has a money-stud in the hide of his neck. That's where I shall get mine from."

"You — a bullfighter?"

"Why not? Did not a great Spaniard, dogged by necessity like myself, go on the stage? Did not the Cid Campeador, Charles V, and Don John of Austria take up lances and fight bulls? Did not Pizarro the Conquistador, the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Count of Puñonrostro do likewise with javelins? As for myself, am I not descended from that famous Viscount of Miranda, Marquis of Torre Cuéllar, who killed bulls, pitting his strength against professionals? For a Spaniard of noble birth to turn bandit, conqueror or bullfighter is quite normal. Moreover, here in Spain, if you don't want to starve to death, there are only two roads to follow: politics or the arena. The arena is cleaner and it also happens to be the only profession for which I was born. The drudgery, the

economy, and the sacrifices of extreme poverty are not for the lad you see before you. On the other hand, danger and parade are in my blood. I was born thus; now I am twenty-one, I am strong, I do not lack courage. I have learned how to manage bulls because I was raised among them; I also know that any beast that rushes through the gates of the *torril* I can dispatch, sword in hand, a corpse for the mules to drag from the arena. Take my word for it, there is enough in the game to bring me plenty of money and allow me to live as I intend. But of course," he added with a certain emotion, "I do not wish Rosarito to suffer in any way."

And that was all. He grew a pigtail, he adopted the traditional short jacket of the bullfighter and disappeared from the social world which he had frequented so assiduously. People saw him only at intervals, on horseback, returning from some ranch, his wide felt hat over his black eyes, his chin-strap under his red lips. His face with its regular, though somewhat hard, features became thinner and bonier, his glance firmer, his gestures and his attitude almost defiant. In his arrogant, thoroughly Andalusian manner, there was a good deal of the lord and not a little of the bandit, especially when he rode by on horseback in country costume wearing leg-guards of leather, mountaineer's gaiters, and a heavy coat. A deep furrow lining his brow, which formerly had been soft

and small as a woman's, made him look as though he were constantly frowning. Two disdainful creases lowered the corners of his large, sensuous mouth.

Less than three months after his resolution to go into the arena, he donned the gala costume of the bull-fighter and fought, much to the scandal of Sevillian society, first at Huelva, then at Alcalá and finally at Murcia. Engagements began to rain down upon him. Promoters fought to secure him. The sight of a young nobleman killing bulls transported the public. The newspapers were filled with his name. The people, in their worship of bravery and daring, found a new idol to adore. The romantic aura about him captivated aristocrat and bourgeois. Rumor spoke of love thwarted, of a broken engagement, of a beautiful young girl sighing after him. Seville asked for nothing better; Paco became famous. The *cantaores* composed strophes and *tangos* in his honor, the blind, verses, and the cigarette-girls, songs. Although he fought only young bulls, he earned almost as much money as the most reputed of matadors. And when he fought in Madrid for the first time, his friends and club-fellows, realizing they were obeying the traditions and desire of Spain, appeared everywhere in his company, at the theatre, in the park, in the streets. Nor did Paco seek to avoid this adulation. Far from concealing his new profession, he proclaimed it. He wore the small-clothes of the bullfighter although this

fashion was tending to disappear. As a reaction against the grotesque man-about-town air affected by bullfighters, he exaggerated the picturesque note of his dress and wore his pigtail fully exposed so that no one might mistake his calling. Otherwise, he was still in every way the popular fellow of old, possibly a trifle less of a spendthrift, yet always ready to go on a spree and to seek amusements of all kinds. He never went alone, and, wherever he went, he was the cynosure of all eyes.

That evening, there were several celebrities of the arena in the house, yet Paco's table was the centre of attraction. Besides his Sevillian acolytes, Cuenca the painter, Pepe Míguez, and the picador Tabardillo, he was accompanied by several gentlemen and young fellows who had come from Madrid to see him take his license. At this table, they discussed the problem of the future of Spain, which ran perpetually from mouth to mouth without ever finding a solution; they spoke too of painting, women, bulls, horses, and the *cante hondo*. Cuenca raised the tone of the conversation to the general and the transcendental. His artist's imagination and his logical mind inspired him to establish realities without any apparent relation or affinity, sometimes even opposed, and to consider everything from the metaphysical point of view. Kant, Hegel, and their disciples kept him in a state of perpetual ebullition. Moreover he had read many

rare books, strange chronicles, ancient volumes with illumined capitals; about painting, popular art and all kinds of Spanish traditions, he possessed a sort of precious erudition which he interlarded and spiced with philosophy. Thus in this milieu scarcely concerned with the intellectual and subtle, the names of Plato, of Seneca, of Saint Theresa, of others even more unfamiliar, mingled with those of artists of the arena or the *tablao*. Paco's andalusianism, Míguez's conservative tendencies and Tabardillo's love of antiques, which bound him to history and tradition without the help of the Church, caused all three of them to listen to Cuenca with delight, to applaud his fantasies and to adopt, in their conversation at the café, the critico-philosophic spirit of the painter.

Cuenca scarcely looked like a *Sevillano*. His beard and his hair were of so bright a red that he had been nicknamed "Rufus." His eyes were blue, his lower jaw as prominent as that of the princes of the house of Austria, his body thin and loose-jointed; but in his soul flowered all the graces of Andalusia.

"What an idea ! Refuse to fight in Seville, where you were born and where you can have the town for the asking ? And why, may I ask ?"

Don Gaspar del Busto, attorney for the bull-fighting interests in Madrid and consequently a man of some note, was questioning Paco.

"I haven't the faintest idea myself, Don Gaspar.

Because of pride, perhaps—or humility. Anyhow, from the very beginning, I said to myself, ‘You mustn’t fight in Seville so long as you are not sure you can carry it off just as you intend to.’”

“You wanted to make your *début* to the tune of a tremendous ovation, eh?”

“Why, yes, I suppose you are right,” Paco answered with a laugh.

“Well?”

“That is just about it, I imagine.”

“Good luck to you, Paco—I wish you success—”

“Success? I am a rotten picador, a poor ceramist and a wretched antiquary,” declared Tabardillo, who, in truth, was all three, “but from the stands I can divine what few people see, and I assure you, Don Gaspar, no matador in Spain can dispatch a bull as perfectly as Paco.”

“Tell me, Paco, do you really deal the death blow *á recibir*; do you really receive the bull at the point of your sword without moving?” Don Gaspar asked, half astonished, half sceptical. “You remember, when you fought in Madrid, I was sick and could not go to the arena.”

“That’s what evil tongues whisper, Don Gaspar.”

“Well, well, that’s a sight worth seeing; a *señorito* of the nobility accomplishing what people with guts have never been able to do. For everything the books tell us about Romero, Curro Guillén, Montes, Chic-

lanero and one-eyed Domínguez is certainly made of whole cloth; so are the tales of José Cándido and of Martincho distracting the beast with hat or hand just as they killed it. There's a good joke for you ! I have often seen Frascuelo and Cara-Ancha try the trick; but they never succeeded without stepping away from the bull."

"You shall judge for yourself !" said Tabardillo, with perfect conviction.

Then the conversation turned to the stock to be run the next day, which they had examined in the afternoon at Tablada, having left very early in the morning in order to try out the horses. These trials attracted a great crowd, less because of the spectacle than because of the general excitement and comment that greeted the picadors as they showed off their style and their vigor, striking huge blows with the butt of their *garrochas* against a wall, to train their horses' mouths and teach them to swerve and escape from the bull's horns. After groping a little, they would press their pikes so strongly against the wall that the horses' hamstrings gave under the violence of the shock. "Toroo !" they would shout, accentuating the last syllable furiously as if, indeed, they were mastering a wild beast of extraordinary ferocity. Then they rushed away as quickly as they could, turning their weapon around, just as they did after an attack in the middle of the arena.

So, what with the horse tests and the opportunities they offered to examine the stock at Tablada and to comment upon all this in the cafés, the days and nights of the Seville season wore on; nor did the enthusiasts ever dream of bothering about anything else. Here was a preparation admirably calculated to make them react, in all its intensity, to the emotion of the spectacle when at last the bugle rang, when the parade filed past them amid applause and huzzas, when the first bull of the day bounded into the arena, death between its horns, fortune and glory in its withers.

C H A P T E R T W O

AT THE tables of the *Tronío* the sensational meeting of the two rival matadors, the most celebrated of their time, Paco Quiñones' license and la Trianera's revolutions in the art of the dance provided the sole theme for conversation. Those who yielded to the spell of the arena rarely escaped that of the stage. The twin enchantments increased their sway in proportion to the emotional exigencies of the public; they stimulated each other reciprocally. The public, completely familiar with the most obscure details of bullfighting, with the history of all the studs and the style of each individual bullfighter, was no less capable of drawing distinctions between the different forms and modes of popular dramatic art. This public penetrated its arcana, appreciated its every shade and subtlety and perhaps, on the *tablao*, sought the expression of the daring of the arena beneath lyrical sorrow, and, in the arena, the true incarnation of the *tablao's* splendor and magnificence. The correlation of the two tastes and their

intimate correspondence with love and pleasure were stressed more clearly among professional bullfighters. "Bulls call for wine, wine for the *cante* and the *cante* implies the turmoil of love," Cuenca the painter was wont to declare. In truth the need of finding solace from fear and love was among the main causes of their taste for the art of El Canario, El Breva and El Chacón, an art which, in turn, inspired the cult of courage and the languors of sentimentality not only in the zealots of the arena but in the entire Andalusian people.

"What bulls have they assigned to you, Paco ?" Don Gaspar asked.

"An Orozco and a Míguez."

"Speaking of Míguez, did you really tell Don Antonio that he only raised treacherous cattle ?" Don Gaspar inquired, while Pepe, the breeder's son, had moved off to speak to a friend. "Imagine calling the choicest wild bulls of Spain 'cattle.' And to Don Antonio's face ! Why, the man is prouder than Don Rodrigo on the scaffold ! That's no mean enemy you have made, Paco ! Don Antonio is the master of the arenas of Andalusia; he can do you all manner of harm. Not a very clever trick on your part, Paco, my lad !"

"I know it, Don Gaspar !" Paco replied, crossing his legs and striking his boots with his open hand like a herdsman, "but do you blame me ? The fellow was

really too tactless. It was right here; we were talking about the quarrel between the picadors and the breeders as to whether the point of the pike should be two inches longer or no. Well, he ignored the ties of friendship that had bound him to my uncle, he forgot that I myself now wear the bullfighter's pigtail and he grew so excited that he accused the bullfighters of having lost all honor and the matadors of being cowards and thieves, fit to fight snails. You know Don Antonio never jests. First I said what was necessary in a friendly tone, but as he began again and kept on making sarcastic remarks at my expense, I finally lost all patience and told him not only what you heard, but a few politenesses in my own manner to boot — for instance: that my picadors would attack his bulls with the butts of their pikes, to give the beasts every possible advantage up to the moment when I dealt the death-blow, and that, before the kill, I would kick them in the snout. Now I am sorry I said it, but it's no use crying over spilt milk."

"You were quite right, Paco," young Salcedo put in, "either a man is frank or he isn't. Remember the verse:

*The gentleman must always strive,
To speak with courtesy and tact.
But if his tongue should slip, by God,
It would be shameful to retract.*

"Quite right, too !"

Now the artists climbed up on the stage and took their places on the little classic benches in customary order: the guitarists in the centre, the singers on the right, and the dancers at both ends. Conversation ceased. Silence reigned. All eyes turned to the magic ring which held the hearts of the Andalusian people captive under the wizard's spell of *malagueña*, *tango*, *soleá*, and *seguidilla*. The artists, more dignified and more ceremoniously dressed than usual, exchanged bows with people in the audience. The guitars, after a flowery prelude, attacked the theme, and, amid a drone as of bees, the dancers began to beat their hands and stamp their heels in time with the music.

"Let's go !" cried a dancer. And with a bound he landed in the centre of the *tablao* stamping his foot to the rhythm half a dozen times with force and vigor; then, as who might say: "Here I am ! Look at me !" he stood stock-still, assuming an insolent and graceful posture.

Next, waving his arms and snapping his fingers, he executed several very clear, almost academic figures, full of a pretentious subtlety, each more complicated, agitated, and suggestive than the last. He was about to plunge into the frenzy of the *tango* when one of the singers began the first strophe of *La Billetera*. The clapping and cheering redoubled.

"Bravo, bravo !" cried a dancer, already maddened by the gipsy's performance.

But El Ñaño did not hear. Possessed by the demon of pride, he was dancing with legs, arms, belly, eyes, mouth, with all his body. He writhed, from head to foot, always moving his hips. He drew himself up and recoiled, he rose and fell without ceasing to stamp on the sonorous boards with a mathematical precision, following the rhythm of the guitar and the singer's voice note by note. His short tight-fitting jacket and high-waisted trousers moulded his body, thin, flexible, and straight as a rapier. La Trianera had told him:

"I'm bringing you to Seville and I want you to out-do all the other dancers. Do you understand ? Very well then, go fast on the footwork and easy on the liquor !"

And the man fell to. His sallow face had turned crimson. His black hair fell forward in thick locks over his knotted brow. His heart-breakers, plastered against his temples with soap, had become loosened; they now hid his dry, long ears. Possessed of a sort of Dionysian fury, he would certainly have died of a syncope on the spot had not one of the guitarists flung a "Let's get on !" to him, bidding him end his dance with the final effect, a diabolic tattoo of stamping, into which El Ñaño put all the pride of a dancer and which he followed by two complete circumvolutions and a sudden stop.

A burst of applause rang through the house. One client tossed him his cap; another a cigar; a third climbed onto the stage and sought to embrace him.

"Thanks, thanks ! It's always a pleasure !" El Ñaño repeated, raising his arms and letting them fall again like a matador after a "pyramidal" sword-thrust.

The proprietor of the café, who in his singing days had been dubbed king of the *seguidilla*, crossed the room beaming, complimenting his star clients and going to great lengths to satisfy the public's curiosity about the dancer. Without pausing to chat long, he drew near Paco's table, for he had a message to deliver to Paco.

"Sit down, Silverio," Don Gaspar said, offering him his hand and waving to a chair with affectionate familiarity. "I suppose you know that lad doesn't keep his feet in his pocket."

"Lord, no ! Have you noticed, gentlemen, how he goes straight to the heart of his subject ? When I engaged la Trianera, she told me: 'My partner's body is twenty years old but he has a century of dancing in either foot. He's worth ten dollars a night and not a penny less.'"

Tabardillo, who looked not unlike a fighting cook because his face was very thin, his nose hooked, and his neck vermilion, long, and rough, craned it as far forward as he could, and, as one who reveals a secret of the utmost importance, cried:

"That woman will revolutionize the dance. I saw her at Córdoba; she created a genuine furore. La Mejorana, la Macarrona, and all the others are so many little girls compared to her. She deepens the art, she makes it an expression of the soul of the gipsy, just as Pitoche does with the *cante*!"

"That is quite true," the painter affirmed. "Haven't you noticed, gentlemen? When Pitoche sings, the *malagueña* acquires the depth and the opaque tonalities of the *soleares* and *seguidillas*. It is no longer a gentle plaint, but a wail, a sort of agony, a wrenching. . ."

"Quite so!" cried Silverio with the authority his old title of king of the *cante hondo* par excellence conferred upon him, "you can say of Pitoche what someone said about El Chacón: 'He swoops from the *seguidilla* onto the *malagueña* as an eagle swoops down upon its prey.'"

"For my part," Cuenca replied, "I rather think that the true gipsy spirit comes from within, from below. The *seguidilla* is like the shark that swims straight up to the surface from the depths of the sea, swallows its prey and returns to the depths again."

"Capital!"

"And to think that there are still people who deny the *cante* any value, even a musical value, because it is not bound by certain hard and fast rules, because it is sheer freedom and direct expression. Perhaps

this is heresy, but no music save Beethoven's upsets me as those gipsy plaints do, because no music is so much of the people, so miserable and so human."

"Well, Pura's dancing comes from below, from within, from the depths of the sea!" Tabardillo interrupted, "she takes *tangos* and *alegrías*, which are somewhat gay — pastimes as we call them — and she can add a flavor of passion, an utterly gipsy fury which make of them a perfect parallel to the *cante hondo*."

Making the most of his friends' preoccupation as they listened to erudite speeches from Cuenca and Tabardillo, Paco asked in a low voice:

"Did she mention me to you?"

"The moment she saw me. She told me she had heard your family was ruined and she knew you had turned bullfighter, but she did not know whether Rosarito was happy, whether you were still seeing Pastora and so forth."

"We used to be very good friends, as you may remember," said Paco. "After each number, she would join me at my table and tell me about the troubles that scoundrel Pitoche caused her. Poor child! What suffering her love brought her! And . . . is she pretty?"

"Upon my word, she is as pretty as the Virgin of the Valley! But you will see for yourself presently! In the meanwhile, I must present you to El Califa. I bring you a message from him. He said: 'Tell

Quiñones that I would be delighted to make his acquaintance; tell him I invite him to come and drink a cup of coffee with me.' So if you don't mind coming?"

"Certainly, I am at your disposal."

Bowing right and left, he accompanied Silverio towards El Califa's table; as the latter saw them approach, he rose and went to meet them, hat in hand. This action caused a general surprise since the matador was reputed to be conceited and boorish. His clothes were determinedly elegant; he wore a jacket and waistcoat of green velvet, a red silk sash, and lilac trousers. A solitaire shone on his little finger, two others on his embroidered plastron. A heavy chain of unpolished gold, bearing two ancient fobs, hung from his waistcoat, falling over his belt. Bullfighters never wore this ostentatious accoutrement before a fight, and least of all at Seville, but only afterwards and only when they had met with great success; El Califa's costume consequently appeared to everybody as a proud challenge to his local rivals and to the public. They proposed to make him pay dearly for such singular arrogance.

The master of the arena offered Paco his hand and looking him in the eye:

"I have heard a great deal about you," he said.

Brilliant glances of admiration and envy fell upon the two bullfighters. They were clean-cut, athletic,

splendidly built; both were clad with equal swagger, though Paco less ostentatiously than the matador. Under the faultlessly tailored short coat of the one and the jacket of the other, under their richly figured shirt-fronts and high trousers, one divined the vigorous muscles, the wide thoraxes, the supple torsos of these two splendid young men. The public feasted its eyes upon them; in El Califa, the great Rafael's heir, it could not help admiring the matador who was conferring the highest honors of the arena upon his birthplace, Córdoba, and in Paco Quiñones, the daring newcomer who might well wrest the sceptre from the Town of the Caliphs to hand it to the City of the Kings. The ancient rivalry between Seville the Wise and Córdoba the Noble flowered in the arena, arousing not only the two cities but the whole peninsula.

"What swagger the lad has!" Don Gaspar commented, "look how he lets the public admire him without the slightest embarrassment. What a world of meaning in the glances of those novices, as they stare at him with open mouth! What an example for them in this young man, yesterday poor and unknown, today wealthy and celebrated. What melancholy in the eyes of those who have not succeeded and who know they will never succeed! What anxiety in the glance of those others, filled with doubt and terror, yet unwilling to own themselves beaten. What a poem in the hearts of all of them! The illustrious

bullfighter, paradoxical and absurd as it may seem, professes idealism and energy to our crowds. He speaks to them in a language they understand; he inspires them with a desire for gold and a taste for glory, a stimulant, the only one they possess. There may be other more noble influences, but none reaches the people, and were it not for the bullfighter, whom the moralists blindly condemn, the people would never know a spiritual element."

One of the young men from Madrid, a lawyer, said:

"It is a pity this stimulus also creates blackguards and bullies. Otherwise its influence would be undeniably healthy and profitable. I like bulls very much, but. . ."

"That is the other side of the picture. But what in the world is there without a bad side to it? Besides, your accusation is unfair. Spain has always had its bullies and blackguards, but under other names. Our classical theatre and our picaresque novels are filled with both types. In what heretic garb, in what *sanbenitos* have they not tricked out the art of courage and of grace? For bullfighting is simply that. Your twopenny sociologists hold it responsible for the stagnation of Spain, without realizing that there are particularly backward regions in this country where bullfighting exerts no influence whatever. If it did, the natives would prove far less slack. Emulation of the bullfighter stands for activity and cleanliness. When I

learned that Paco had adopted the calling, I was sorry; but when I thought that he might raise the standard of the art and become a popular idol more noble than his colleagues, I changed my mind. It is not inappropriate for a *señorito* to prove that rich blood still flows through the veins of the aristocracy. But tell me, Tabardillo, does Paco really 'get' as many bulls as people say?"

"It's extraordinary!"

"How is he in the arena?"

"Terrific, Don Gaspar. You expect the beast to crush him at every step, and that's no lie! His is a very plain technique, without the least flourish; every detail is genuine. In a word, pure gold. With the *muleta* he scarcely moves at all; when he brings his arms back with the cape, a cyclone would not budge him. Then he raises his 'tool' on a level with his face and swish! he buries it to the hilt."

"What's your opinion, Cuenca?"

"I agree with Tabarda. Paco is always in the danger zone; no one can master the bulls as he does. He fights between the horns; the return lunge never reaches him. And the beasts feel so exhausted that after two or three passes of his *muleta* they seem to beg for mercy."

"You amaze me. But where the devil did the lad learn all this?"

"He was born with it, Don Gaspar," resumed Cu-

enca smiling, "the things he does cannot be learned for they are written nowhere."

"All the same, I'm nervous; I'm afraid he'll never measure up to my hopes when he gets out there tomorrow with the two greatest bullfighters of the age."

Tabardillo replied:

"He will be brilliant as the sun. I can promise you a thrill! The others may perhaps go in for more fancy tricks, but when it comes to the little shiver down your spine, Paco's the lad to give it to you!"

The Cordoban left the café with two friends who accompanied him wherever he fought and were never more than a pace behind him. Five minutes later the *banderilleros* or dart-throwers and the picadors of his quadrille followed him.

"We'll show them what's what, tomorrow!" somebody cried as they passed.

"God help us, so we will!" one of them answered.

Paco returned to his table. A *cantaor's* prelude drew all eyes towards the *tablao*. The din ceased as though by magic. The men's faces flushed, the emotion of the *cante hondo* surged through every heart. Paco rested his elbows on the table, held his face in his hands and listened. Like most Andalusians he reacted to the *cante* and could tell from the prelude the style, the tone and the particular color the great singers had given the plaintive *malagueña*, the proud *soleá*, and the terrible *seguidilla*. The singer of the

prelude, Pitoche, while retaining a thoroughly personal style, yet combined the triumphant brilliance of El Canario, the lyricism of El Breva, the depth and the power of El Chacón. Often as Paco had heard him, he never failed to experience a sort of inward wrench, a certain clutch at his breast, a lyrical gust that stirred up the triste Andalusian gaiety at the very depths of his soul.

In Paco's group they expatiated upon the strange emotions inspired by the *cante hondo*. When there were not too many clients, the proprietor would join them for a chat, sitting down at their table as an equal and ordering a drink. At Paco's request, the old *cantaor* would reminisce about the singing of former days and the artists of his time. He conjured up the lives and exploits of all the artists he had met in the course of his long career. He told of the adventures, the volcanic passions, the terrible dramas and harrowing sorrows of those whose lives had been consecrated to song. How many a verse they had sung; what joy they brought to the gayest of parties ! But the morbid influence of the *cante* had refined their sensibilities and broken down their will and, almost to a man, they had fallen victim to their tragic passions. Many had died by the hand of a rival or of an irate husband, others a prey to jealousy or alcohol. All the songs they sang, ancient and modern, dwelt upon the bitter sufferings of love. Silverio had a profound

knowledge of his art and he spoke with an emotion that endowed his speech, which, though crude, was full of savor and imagery, with a particular charm. Sometimes he came near to eloquence, as, for instance, when he sought to make his hearers understand what he felt when he sang.

"To sing and to suffer was one and the same thing for me," he said. "That is how all good singers feel. A *cantaor* who does not suffer is like a guitar without strings. People in general imagine that sighs and trills are a play to the gallery, bits of virtuosity, embellishment. Not at all, they are cries from the heart. We are not machines built to emit sounds, as opera tenors are; we are creatures who suffer torment, who sing lest we weep. We sing our sorrow. When Anilla de Ronda suffered because of the lover who had abandoned her, when she murmured

*I do not grieve because you left me, love,
I grieve because in going, you robbed me of
My heart's red blood . . .*

the public, knowing what had happened, came to the café not to hear her sing but to watch her suffer."

And he launched into a series of tales which generally ended in a knife-thrust or on a hospital bed. Paco and his friends spent hours listening to the stories and couplets issuing from the old singer's dark throat

like echoes from a cavern and invariably dealing with love, torture, blood, and death.

Ah, but you would not know me again !

trilled Pitoche; then he sang a new strophe no doubt inspired by the presence of his former mistress. His somewhat thick voice, with tonalities occasionally sombre, swelled in the middle of each stanza, as if a wave of passion surged through it. Then at the end of the strophe he burst into prolonged sobs and moans, endowing what in the classical *malagueña* was no more than a throatiness, with a vibrant lamentative quality. As Paco listened, a prey to the most disturbing sensations, yonder, under the stage, the dancer, about to make her entrance and trying her poses before the looking-glass, stopped, as though transfixed, and listened, too. That voice recalled to her the honey and gall of her first love: their parties at Eritaña, the Pasaje de la Magdalena and the private rooms at Juanito Castañedo's, picnics on the banks of the Guadalquivir, suppers of fried fish after they left the café, the hours of frenzied passion in the little white room, and then jealousy, quarrels, insults, betrayal, solitude, misery. . .

After Pitoche, other artists sang and danced, but the public, impatient to see la Trianera, paid not the

slightest heed. First, a singer, brown as tobacco, stood quite motionless, her eyes closed, her appearance suggesting an owl; she sang prison songs in a harsh, raucous voice. Next, a woman who sought to remedy her lack of gipsy characteristics by means of a lavish use of little combs, rings, and coral bracelets, broke into a *soleá*. Finally a dancer executed some steps which were not ungraceful, miming the anguish of a bullfighter suddenly taking fright.

There was a pause. Then the musicians played a prelude, the guitars strummed more briskly, and, at one end of the stage, la Trianera appeared, draped superbly in her Manilla shawl, her wide-brimmed felt hat over her ear, a lighted cigarette between her lips. *Olés*, vivats, and deafening applause greeted her entrance. With her provoking beauty, her sovereign grace, the compelling brilliance of her glance and her proud, free carriage, this fascinating creature seemed to her audience to be the incarnation not of the superb and spirited woman of pleasure but of Andalusia itself. Striking the ground lightly with her heel, and looking out obliquely, as though mimicking the cadenced walk of an Andalusian woman, she walked twice around the *tablao* — her own special entrance known as “Pura’s walk.” Next, from upstage, she came forward towards the audience, accentuating her stamps, the boards ringing as her movements grew

increasingly *staccato*. Reaching the edge of the stage, she turned rapidly about, unwound her shawl, laid down her hat and removed the cigarette from her lips. She stood stock-still, facing the public, her hands on her hips, her head thrown back defiantly, her eyes half-closed, her firm, slight breasts in a provoking attitude, her mouth smiling, red, moist, offering love and sin as a pomegranate its bloody pulp. Cheers burst forth; a few hats rolled at the feet of the dancer.

Suddenly Pura's expression changed, she moved out of her pose, and, growing grave, raised her hands in a swift writhing movement, her hips swaying ever so slightly, her arms, like serpents of temptation, describing graceful arabesques, slow caresses, erotic gestures. She seemed to be expressing rhythmically the anxious prayers of a woman of Triana at the birth of desire. Gradually, by gesture after gesture, Goya's *maja* gave way to the gipsy girl, the true *gitana*, now cooing like a turtle-dove, now springing like a wild beast on its prey. On the crude white wall against which her silhouette was reflected and magnified, the curves of her body became more and more voluptuous, her undulations more lascivious. With lively facial pantomime and sudden movements of the shoulder, a *cantaor* sang:

*My love is the spice
And the flower of Andalusia.*

and *olés*, cries, and loud syncopated clapping burst forth. The desire she read on the flushed faces of the men warmed her dancer's blood; la Trianera emphasized her rhythms and gestures. Her legs moved, her hips rolled under her long-trained furbelowed skirt in a spasm of carnal mimicry; she contracted her supple body, then stretched it taut, offered herself with shameless lust; she advanced on her heels, arched her back, swelling her chest, her breasts expanded, tense; she stopped short, immediately to resume the tapping of her heels, a maddening tattoo, now languorous, now sharp and swift. Presently, with gradations and shades of expression infinitely skilful, she was no longer enacting the supplications of supreme desire but the urge and surrender of the love duel, emphasizing the intent of her pauses and her contrasts with merely a glance of the eye or the slightest, most subtle play of physiognomy.

The audience, overjoyed, exploded into cries of a half-sensual, half-ribald enthusiasm. This dance, a faithful summary of Moorish voluptuousness and Castilian pride, moved, in the most secret shrines of the soul, the obscure instincts, the strange springs of abandonment and mastery, of pain and pleasure, of life and of death that ferment in the depths of all eroticism.

Meanwhile the singer in a voice ever more vibrant and warm, continued to tell his strophe bead by bead:

*When my mistress walks
It is roses and irises
Roses and irises
Roses and irises
Roses and irises she strews on her way.*

The brief twanging of the guitars ceased before he had finished, but still the twinkling feet of the dancer tapped in time with his pearly notes. Her shawl, red as the carnation trembling in her hair, her lips, twin crimson rose-petals against the snowy whiteness of her teeth, were as alluring as the grace of her step and the fire in her eye.

The guitars resounded again, twanging more harshly than before; the clapping of hands redoubled and the *cante* grew more strident. Now her dance became a paroxysm of folly, a rageful agony, a Dionysian frenzy which caught the entire audience. The lithe arch of her back, her provoking poses, the intricately crossed arabesques of her dancing feet, her hands, tremulous with desire, wrung delirious cries from the stage as well as from the audience. Walking-sticks, beating out the measure on the floor, made the glasses tremble; the lights reeled drunkenly. The guitarists plucked their strings, their instruments vertical on their knees, their bodies so many epileptic penstrokes. And la Pura pale, her face distorted, her mouth tightened, the whites of her eyes showing, fol-

lowed the rhythm of this frenzied music. Suddenly, stepping forward towards the public and drawing up her skirt on either side above her knees, with a quick movement, she laid her hands on her hips and, her head thrown back, she stood almost immobile from head to waist while her feet executed a sort of rhythmical drumming and her white dress fell slowly like the curtain of a theatre.

Hats flew through the air, literally covering the stage. Not a few in the audience had climbed on their chairs and were applauding frantically from their point of vantage. Striking his breast with both his fists, a man shouted:

"She is the wonder of wonders, the ultimate, the end of ends." Then, with Latin exuberance: "She is vast as the Mediterranean !"

Paco Quiñones, very pale, but smiling, advanced towards the dancer with a glass of *manzanilla*. He threw the glass, Andalusian fashion, in the air, and, catching it without letting a drop fall, offered it to her amid the cheers of the audience. La Trianera did the same with even more grace and skill, swallowed its contents at one gulp and giving him back the glass:

"Thanks Paco," she said, "my heart told me you were in the audience."

"I came here only to see you . . . and talk to you, Puriya."

"When shall it be ?"

"Now, this evening. I shall be waiting for you at the little door. Will you come?"

"Without fail!" she replied.

The last turn was finished. The artists came down from the *tablao* and, eager for refreshment, scattered among their friends' tables; they were exhausted. The dancers themselves shared the general enthusiasm and praised Pura without reserve. Her superiority as an artist was so patent, and as a woman she stood so immeasurably above them, that she inspired no jealousy.

"It is impossible to dance better than she does!" they declared, "she is a unique artist, the Queen of the Dance!"

Pura had disappeared. As the star, she was not obliged to stay in the hall. Pitoche's wandering eyes sought her in vain. Silverio, standing behind the bar, smiled from ear to ear.

Paco's friends sat spellbound, tongue-tied; the most they could do to express their emotion was to utter short admiring exclamations. But their faces were radiant. At last, as though resuming what he had been thinking for the last half-hour, Cuenca solemnly declared:

"La Pura will be the Doctress of Ávila, the Saint Theresa of the stage."

Paco drank a glass of wine, lost in meditation. It seemed to him he had seen not only a magnificent

dancer but the very soul of Seville in all its passionate grace. And similar impressions were passing confusedly through the minds of his friends. Suddenly, he took leave of them, saying he was going to bed, and went out.

Pitoche wandered about between the tables like a man walking in his sleep.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

WALKING briskly, Paco soon reached the back-door of the *Tronío*, and taking his stand there, waited for Pura. So narrow was the alley, that by stretching his arms he could easily have touched both walls. Not a soul was abroad. But from amid the flowers about the barred windows, young girls peered out, their eyes shining; unknown to their parents they flirted with gallants who, clad in their smartest caps and gayest clothes, leaned against the grilles in strategic attitudes. Here and there, high above, thin threads of light filtered through the windows, illumining the window-boxes and flowerpots across the alley, intensifying the freshness and color of the carnations, roses, and geraniums, masking the wretchedness of the tiny casements and dormers. Bright shafts of light from balconies, caves, and penthouses, falling here and there on the round cobbles of the street, lent a touch reminiscent of Rembrandt. The old tavern building, on the corner, cut off a whole side of the street; a small lantern shone

dimly on a sign bearing the legend: "Here good people find good fare."

With its white darts of light projected upon the ink-colored walls, this corner suggested a Goya etching, topped by a narrow ceiling of sky, illumined from behind like a stage-set. Suddenly a man staggered out of the tavern. Leaning against the wall, he removed his hat and cried out: "Lord, I'm as drunk as David's sow !" Then, lurching from right to left, he shuffled along his way.

Pura arrived almost immediately. Paco came to meet her, both hands outstretched.

"Puriya !"

"Paco !"

Under the narrow door they stood for a moment, gazing at each other without a word. Then:

"Child, child, how pretty you are !" Paco finally said.

"Really, Paco ? Do you mean it ?"

"Of course I mean it !"

"Oh, I'm so glad you think me pretty, Paco !" she answered, flaunting her shawl and pirouetting on her heels. "But how about yourself, Paco ? A fine fellow you have become, and what an air ! Can it be you ? Is it really my old friend Paco, who used to lend me money and never dreamed of asking for anything in return ? Oh, how anxious I was to catch a glimpse of you again !"

"And how I have longed for you, Pura. I thought of you constantly. . ."

"All the while I was travelling through God's foreign lands, Paco, the only person I recalled with any pleasure was you. You were so good to me in the old days when I was eating my heart out ! I'm grateful, you know, Paco, grateful as can be. Everywhere I went, I managed to get news of you. I was in Paris when I heard you had become a bullfighter. You, Paco, a bullfighter, and famous, into the bargain ! It's true, Paco; they say you are an amazing matador. The Marquis's nephew a bullfighter ! It's staggering !"

"Ah well, that is the way of the world. I am a bullfighter and you are the greatest dancer in Spain and the most dazzling gipsy I ever laid eyes on."

"You don't mean it ?"

"I swear I do."

"Then you really find me as attractive as that ? Of course, I have improved. In the old days, I knew nothing about coiffures and flounces ! Now things are different."

"Let me feast my eyes upon you, Puriya," Paco went on, stepping back a pace the better to examine her, "yes, Silverio was right; you are a match for the Virgin of the Valley."

"Come along, Paco, stop making fun of me. Tell me why you turned bullfighter ?"

"Let us talk about you first. Shall we go upstairs ? We can be quiet up there," he suggested, offering her his arm.

"I can't do it; I have an engagement."

"Oh, I see !" Paco exclaimed in obvious annoyance.

"Yes, but do you know where ? I'm going to old Mother Curra's. I am dying to eat some *churros* and fritters and Estremadura sausages wrapped in paper; the howling sort, you know !"

"Very well, then I shall leave you."

"What do you mean 'leave me' ?"

"Didn't you tell me you were expected ?"

"Yes, the *churros* . . . the fritters . . . the sausages . . . and the Prince Charming !"

"Indeed ! And who may this happy mortal be ?"

"You, silly ! Have you forgotten what I told you at Curra's the day I left ? I shall come back in two or three years; we will leave the café together the first night I dance there, we will come here alone, just you and I, and we will have a party ! You'll tell me your worries, and I'll tell you mine."

"Puriya ! you are the cleverest and most engaging creature in the world."

"Heigh-ho ! Let us be off ! It's my treat this evening. Promise me implicit obedience ?"

"I promise."

They left the dark alley, arm in arm, chatting and laughing. Paco's carriage was waiting at the corner,

the coachman, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and short coat, slumbered on the seat.

"Is that Covacha ?" the dancer asked. "Watch his expression !" Then, standing near the lantern so her features would show up, she yelled, "Hey, Covacha."

"Jesus ! Holy Virgin of Carmel !" the fellow cried in amazement, as he caught sight of her and jumped down from his box.

"Come along, you lazy oaf, pull down the top and drive us to Mother Curra's !" Paco ordered laughing.

They climbed into the carriage; the small Jerez horses set forth at a noisy trot.

"Paco ?"

"Yes ?"

"How nice it is to sit beside you again."

He took her hand and pressed it gently.

Covacha, pretending that his horses needed limbering, and wishing to prove his mastery as a Jehu, cracked his whip right and left through the air and against the ground like a Jupiter hurling thunderbolts.

"Ah, how good my beloved Seville smells !" cried the dancer, taking a deep breath to inhale the air, heavy with the fragrance of orange blossoms, and the sharp odors emanating from patio, balcony, and grating. "This heady scent makes me drunk !" she added, swayed by a delicious intoxication.

The evening was warm. The passers-by walked

with their hats in their hands or thrust far back on their heads; they chatted together, calling to each other across the street. Some were humming Reverte's *sevil-lanas*. More than one walked unsteadily. As the carriage passed the groups standing at street-corners, *olé*s and cheers rained down upon the graceful pair. Paco smiled, Pura thanked them with a glance. They drove down wide streets, obscure alleys, and occasionally through sinister slums. At times they perceived the Moorish Tower, the Minaret of Yakub ben Yasuf or the Giralda, smart and smiling as a *maja*.

"How pretty, how graceful and full of life that tower is!" Pura kept on saying.

She was happy as a girl on her return from the convent, re-exploring her native town. As they passed the imposing mass of a church or a public building, she had the carriage stop and feasted her eyes upon it, telling Paco innumerable anecdotes about her childhood, wretched but free.

"Many a time I slept under this doorway. There was a little old woman who sold chestnuts over there; she gave me some every time she sent me on an errand. It was through this alley, here, that I went to the Tobacco Factory every day."

Then she relapsed into silence. From time to time, Paco heard her heave a deep sigh and murmur:

"Seville, blessed city of my heart! *Sevilla de mi alma*."

IN THE back-room of her shop, over her favored clients' table, Mother Curra had laid a patched but spotless tablecloth and set down a tray of glasses, two plates of seasoned olives, two bottles of N.P.U. (Pura's favorite sherry), knives, forks, and a Triana vase filled with deep wine-colored carnations, climbing roses, and blue harebells. The room was quite small and poorly furnished; it communicated with the kitchen and the bedrooms by means of two little side doors and with the drawing-room by a large door. Opposite this door, a casement-window opened out on to a tiny patio, completely filled by an orange tree with shining leaves. The rush-bottomed chairs were of varnished pine. Under the casement-window stood a sofa with springs that creaked at the slightest pressure. A few posters of the Easter bullfights and the forthcoming Feria, two canary-cages which were hung out on the orange tree when the sun shone, and a portrait of Mother Curra and her husband, between two large palms which had been recently blessed, adorned the walls. In one corner a guitar was laid upright on a chair.

When the dancer and Paco reached the back room, Mother Curra emerged from her kitchen, her daughters left their counter and the three women came forward to greet them. Paco and Pura belonged to the old clientèle of the house, which was much frequented by bullfighters, theatrical artists, and gay young men about town. Mother Curra was married to a retired

jockey, the *Seño* Brageli. Her son, a tobacco-dealer, was well known among horse-trainers and circus folk, and one daughter was a singer, which accounted for the friendship between the Curras and Paco and Pura; there was the additional enticement of Amparo and Loliya, two *Sevillanas* who, without being pretty, were most attractive.

"What ever has happened, Puriya?" Mother Curra the flatterer exclaimed joyously, "you look as though you had borrowed the face of the Virgin Herself! God's truth, what features! And what a figure you cut! Do you remember, Don Paco? I used to tell anyone who would listen: 'When that girl realizes her charms and knows how to make use of them, she'll make us sit up!' Well, was I wrong? I know what I'm saying; I haven't got two walnuts in my head but a good pair of eyes! Let me look at you, Puriya."

"But, Doña Curra, was I so very dull in those days?" the dancer said with a peal of laughter.

"Not a bit of it! You were never dull; you were just a scatter-brained snippet. You were not mature; you did not know how to trick yourself out, you lacked coquetry, and anxiety gave you a peaked, rather pale air. But today you're sweet as sugar! Let me kiss you just as I did when you were a little girl and you used to plant yourself in front of that door, a coin in your eye, to show me you had enough money to buy a bun."

The young girls embraced her effusively in turn. Taking her hands and examining her from head to foot, Loliya cried:

"No doubt about it, Pura, you are adorable ! You cannot imagine how happy we all were here when we heard of your good luck. We all loved you in this place."

"Yes, that is true," Amparo said, as she helped her off with her heavy shawl. "We always knew you would become a dancer of the first water, the best in the world."

"She's right. I am an old woman; I have dragged my bones about a long time and I can say it: When you dance, there's nobody like you in the world."

"Then you saw me ?"

"Saw you ? Do you suppose I would forego that pleasure ? We shut up shop, left a sign on the door, saying: 'We have gone to see la Trianera,' and off we went ! You were just beginning when we arrived. There was not a single place vacant; we stood by the door to see you. I cried like a child and as for the girls they were speechless with excitement."

"Your mother is adorable, Amparo," Pura said and she rocked the old woman affectionately in her arms. "Come, let us drink to the health of all of us."

Pouring the wine into the glasses herself, she took the five at once on the tray and, with one hand and a flourish, distributed them gracefully.

Mother Curra went off to "have a bit of a look" at her fish; Amparo and Loliya ran into the drawing-room where the customers were growing impatient. Pura and Paco sat down, and, gazing at each other, burst out laughing without quite knowing why. Paco speared an olive with his fork and offered it to the dancer; she took it with her teeth and smiling:

"Paco," she said, "what a lark! Do you realize what fun this is?"

"Of course I do. I have to pinch myself to make sure I'm not dreaming."

"Listen, Paco, we have got to be friends, real friends, now and forever. I need somebody who is really fond of me, somebody I can be fond of too, without hindrance or mental reservation of any sort. Love affairs, I've had enough of! What I want now is to work, to create my dances, to live in peace. Yes, my love affairs are over! Whoever tries to make love to me will find me all hooks and claws."

"Are you very cruel, then?"

"I am what men have made me, Paco. You remember the life a certain brute we know made me lead. It was he who ruined me. I gave him everything, I was faithful to him, I did not cost him a penny; he was the apple of my eye, I lived with him and never complained of his brutality or of the filthy tricks he played me, and one fine day, for reward, the mule's kick and . . . good-bye to you! The tears

of blood, the mortal weariness, the sleepless nights, the hungry days I endured ! I was often literally without a thing to eat. Then I understood love was leading me nowhere save to a hospital ward, I knew I must be not affectionate but practical, not sincere but amusing, not simple but conspicuous and artificial, since men appreciate only the brilliant, even when it is tinsel. That was when I decided to change my tactics and let everything else go to the devil. I left Seville with a dollar in my pocket and the savagery of a Miura bull in my heart. I danced at Cádiz, at Jerez, at Málaga. I learned a few rather useful little things, sometimes from one dancer, sometimes from another, I borrowed whatever would fit into my art. I thought my dancing out, I deepened it, as they say over there. I spent all I earned on clothes, on making myself chic. Then one fine day I lighted out with an impresario from Madrid who had fallen in love with me. He was my manager in Paris, in London, in Moscow, where I met la Macarrona (you ought to have seen la Macarrona in Moscow !) and at last in New York. It was there I met the man who at a dinner presented me with these pearls; as a joke he had hidden them in some choice devilled fish I was eating. If you could have seen my amazement when I bit and discovered his trick. . . As soon as I began to wear pearls, men swarmed around me like flies around

a jam-pot. I had carriages, lackeys, jewels; I would have a fortune now if I had not loved the green cloth and the cursed cards so well. But what could you expect? Gambling consoled me for love lost: I must confess that I could love nobody after Pitoche. Perhaps they are right when they say gipsies can love only gipsies."

Paco watched her carefully while she spoke. Like many of the women of Triana, she had mahogany-colored hair, eyes of light green, and a complexion almost bronzed. Her nose, her somewhat pronounced cheek-bones, and her mouth revealed her gipsy blood; her protruding forehead and the Murillo-like oval of her face proclaimed the purest Sevillian type. Pura was far from being a perfect beauty, but the extraordinary brilliance of her eyes, set in the dark circle of her lashes like two obsidians in a ring of black enamel, the graceful curve of her mouth, red as a slit pimento, and her teeth, white as the seeds within, something mysterious in her expression, half-voluptuous, half-aggressive, proved irresistibly attractive, promising infinite delights to the senses rather than to the soul. Paco noted that her teeth were scrupulously cared for, that her nails were polished and that all her gipsy grace had become more finely subtle in appearance. Her expression and her gestures were more measured than formerly; her language less vulgar, though

studded with picturesque locutions and imbued with the rich flavor of the Andalusian; her pronunciation almost perfect.

"What about that Estremadura sausage, *Seña Curra*?" she cried suddenly, interrupting herself.

"It's right here, wriggling about in the pan," the good woman replied from the kitchen, whence emanated a hot odor of fried oil, garlic, and saffron.

When the sausage was on the table, the dancer brought her nose close to the plate and sniffed the hot dish with delight.

"My mouth is watering. It's three years since I tasted such sausage! Well, what do you think of it?"

Then, with her mouth full and wide open lest she burn herself, turning towards Mother Curra, who stood waiting for her verdict, her hands on her hips, her little picaresque eyes popping out of her face, Pura added:

"It's delicious! Come along now! Pour yourself a glass of sherry!"

"That hits the spot! I can feel it at the top of my head. Holy Jesus, what wine!" the old cook cried, as she drank it down, "it's like heaven flowing through your body."

Then, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand, she returned to her oven and frying-pan.

Paco opened the casement-window; from the little court the fragrance of the orange blossoms filled the

room. "Ah, Pura !" he exclaimed, "in your dancing, you express that deep, wise Andalusia that is in all our hearts, at once tragic and gay, miscreant and fanatic, proud and humble, mystical and sensuous, wealthy and poor. Only yesterday at the café, Tabardillo (you remember him ?) and Cuenca, whom they call the painter of black Spain, were discussing that very topic at my table. After your dance, Cuenca said that you would be the Doctress of Ávila of the *tabla*o."

"Doctress of Ávila ? Who is she ? I don't know the lady."

"Saint Theresa, child."

"God bless him for saying it."

"He was speaking in jest but it was the solemn truth. You express what the others only vaguely suggest. What he meant was that you will establish rules and found orders in art just as Saint Theresa did in religion. You simply must meet Cuenca."

"I want to very much. I get on beautifully with painters; I love to watch them work and hear them talk about their art. They are so different, so intensely real. I used to spend hours in a Basque painter's studio in Paris. And how much I learned just by listening to his talk while he did me as Carmen. You see, I knew nothing about the *majas* of former days, nothing whatever about the old dances like Antón Boliche's *bolero*, in which la Caramba triumphed, or the *zorongo*, Mariana Márquez's road to glory, or all

the other essentially Spanish forms — the *olé*, the *zarambaca*, the *vito*. I never dreamed what they really meant.

“Then, after I had seen his sketchbook and portraits and etchings, it occurred to me to appear on the stage in a costume and setting that conformed with the purest Spanish tradition. I did this and it helped me immeasurably. But I am very ambitious, Paco, and I want more than that —” she confessed as she held her glass to the light and gazed through the honeyed sherry, “I want each dance I do to be a tableau, what they call a ballet abroad; I want every song to be a choreographic interpretation with a scrupulously accurate décor and an appropriate score. Do you see what I mean? Imagine what it would be to dance an interpretation of the spirit of the *saeta*, with the floats, the Nazarenes, the crowd filing down the dark streets, or to portray the *malagueña* in an Andalusian patio, the *soleá* in the kitchen of a farmhouse, the *seguidilla* in a gipsy hovel! Think what could be done with the settings, the costumes, the music, the steps! I can see it all, you know, just as clearly as I see you sitting there opposite me. One of these days I shall show you what I have thought out for the *malagueña*. Ah, Paco, if only I could dance out everything that is boiling here!” she concluded, pressing her forehead with her index-finger.

"You've become a wonderful artist, Puriya ! What passion, what fire !"

"Well, it was bound to be. The old blood has been stirred up again; I'm a true daughter of gipsies. Believe me, Paco, we of the *tablao* are great artists, very great artists, but we have not the slightest education. We don't know the first elements of anything — which does not prevent us from inventing things. Mark my words, Paco; nobody knows how important the *cante* and the dance are going to be !"

"I can't understand why, with such plans in your head, you came back to Spain and to the *tablao*."

"Why, to infuse new blood into my dancing, to steep myself once more in my art and to carry that art, alive and pulsing, from the café to the theatre. My company is already signed up; I've engaged my guitarist, my partner, and my singer. All I need now is a composer and a man with a brush to daub what I have thought out. In this world of ours, Paco, it is imperative to do things on a large scale, to have what is called an ideal, a supreme desire, a mania of some sort to drive you forward. If you could see what people are like abroad ! Everyone has an absorbing interest, a passion; everyone is determined to forge ahead in his own sphere. We are not like that in Spain and that is why we are marking time while the other nations move forward triumphantly."

“Not only you of the *tablao*, but all of us Andalusians are like that, Puriya. We know nothing and we don’t care, either. All those who see the light of day in this blessed country will be exactly the same. How could it be otherwise? What example should we follow? Whom should we imitate? The Catalonians? Find a *Sevillano* who would be willing to become a Catalonian! Besides, we think of life as a perpetual source of enjoyment, which, moreover, we seek with passion and at any price. Anyhow, why the devil *should* we change? What would we gain by it? Here the man who drinks a glass of sherry has not only drunk, but eaten as well; the man who works, plays; the man who suffers is happy; the man who weeps, sings. With barred windows, *azulejos* and flowerpots, we have managed to create that enchantment which great capitals strive to acquire, often quite unsuccessfully, by the pompous display of their work, their knowledge, and their riches. If our heedlessness is responsible for our poverty, it is also one of our greatest riches. We have no will-power but our Lord Jesus of the Great Power undertakes to have it for us. God has not endowed us with great intelligence but He has conferred the gifts of grace and charm upon us; we are not capable of working, but we know how to amuse ourselves. Others construct locomotives, we manufacture castanets. And, as we all march forward towards the grave, the point is: is it better

to do so quickly and without enjoyment or slowly and pleasantly ?

"Do you believe it is nobler and more useful to create riches than to create enjoyment ? Or that you cannot live by merely creating enjoyment ? Nonsense; that is how we live and quite nicely, too. To each his lot: we are different, but we are not inferior. When I ride horseback or when I attack a savage, panting bull, I would not change places with the ruler of the universe. Do our colonies slip from our grasp ? On with the dance ! The world is about to perish ? Let us celebrate a festival in its honor ! Well, Puriya, I maintain that a people careless of its fate, despising work, riches, and knowledge, and loving valor, grace, and pleasure is not out of place in this scoundrelly devil of a world. Bring on the finest wines ! Banish all worries and care !"

"Ah, Paco, how utterly Andalusian you are !"

"Your plan is perfect; it is a great ideal; it will bring you wealth and fame. If I can be useful to you in any way, please call upon me. For my part, I confess that when I throw myself between a bull's horns and caress his snout with my foot, as the newspapers have it, it is not for glory but for cash. I love applause; triumph intoxicates me, danger attracts me; yet save for my uncle's follies — God rest him ! — and for my family's ruin, I would never have dreamed of fighting bulls. Glory ? Pffft, I don't care a fig

for it ! Glory for me means good wines, good cigars, my own horses, a free life, and a hundred dollars in my pocket to amuse myself."

"*Olé !* But tell me, Paco, don't you regret the days when you were a man about town ?"

"No," he said earnestly, "formerly, I was nothing; today I am somebody. The bullfighter is not only an artist but a nobler artist, perhaps, than the others, since, by exposing his life at all times, he shows what intelligence and courage can accomplish, which is a very important thing. He is even more than that; he is a product of the race-instinct postulated by an imperious necessity. We are a virile people; we need strong emotions lest we decay and lose caste. If the old Spanish qualities are not yet dead from disuse, it is perhaps because of the magic of the arena galvanizes and preserves them. The bravery and arrogance we cannot apply in industry and commerce, we express in the art of bullfighting, the most virile and boldest of all arts, an art exclusively Spanish, and properly so. We invented bullfights, brotherhoods, and our popular art, because there were no new worlds left us to conquer, as in the days of the Catholic Kings. There's the whole thing in a nut-shell. While other countries move forward, while progress gnaws at their souls, while they make frantic efforts to acquire hoards of superfluous possessions, we create forces of joy and ardor which, in time, will enable us once again to be

what we were in the past. Cuenca maintains that the solution of the Spanish problem — shall we remain Spaniards or become Europeans ? — does not lie in the domain of politician and philosopher, but in the heart of the people itself and that the people will find this solution not in the Royal Palace nor yet in books but in the arena. If the might of England rose from the playing grounds, why should not the might of Spain rise from the arena ? Does bullfighting make for less strength and substance than cricket ? Listen, Puriya, we must not slander what belongs to us, we must not be ashamed of our callings, you a dancer, I a bullfighter. I am convinced we are right, utterly and completely right.”

“Ah, Paco, there is nobody like you !”

“Don’t you agree with me, Pura ?”

“You ask me that ! Abroad I am proud of being a *Sevillana* and a dancer. And I don’t mind telling you, Paco, that of all the men I have met, not one was as amusing and shrewd as you are.”

He grasped her hands, suddenly grew serious, and, gazing at her through half-closed eyes, his nostrils dilated:

“Do you know, Puriya,” he said, “that you are gradually stealing into my heart ?”

She looked at him as though to read his thoughts; there was a certain reproach in her glance; then her pupils closed languorously and when she opened them

again, she whispered in a hoarse, caressing voice:

"Paco, you must love me very much, eh?"

He drew her towards him; leaning over the table, he pressed his face against hers. They remained thus for several minutes, in silence. They drank. As she laid her glass down on the tray, Pura asked:

"Paco, how did you make a success so quickly? Of course you were always cool as a cucumber! In the country, I saw you testing cows and bulls twice. But from that to earning your living in the arena. . . Paco, be honest. Were you never afraid?"

"Yes, I've been afraid of spoiling my thrust, but never of being caught by the beast. If I thought of that, I would not attempt such feats. Really, the only way of fighting I know is to get as near as possible. If I dreamed of running away, any bull could get me."

And, displaying his broad but regular, very white teeth, he added:

"It could not be otherwise, Puriya. I believe in my star and I know that bullfighting is like love — victory to the fearless."

"By the way, how are you getting on with Pastora?"

A cloud of melancholy darkened his frank, radiant face.

"That is all over now," he said between clenched teeth, contemplating the smoke of his cigar as it rose in graceful spirals and broke into undulant arabesques.

"The devil take all our worries, Paco," she cried,

moving over to the sofa, "come here, sit down beside me, and sing for me."

The shop was already closed. The girls had retired. In the kitchen, Mother Curra was sweeping and polishing her brasses until they shone like gold; *Seño* Brageli and his son stood beside her, eating the last fritters. Paco picked up the guitar tenderly and laid it across his knees. After a lengthy prelude with much *ad libitum* elaboration, he plunged into the darkest mystery of the *cante*, the gipsy *seguidilla*. His hands, hovering over the magic instrument with flowery gestures, seemed, when his fingers twanged the strings, to caress its smooth glistening belly with the tenderness of a voluptuary. Very softly he played, his expression grave, his brow slightly knit, breathing very gently. The tragical contraction of his mouth, which deepened the corners of his lips, expressed a profoundly sincere emotion. Pura, leaning against him, listened with eyes half-closed. Now she followed the magical hands as they wrung pitiful sobs from the strings, now she gazed admiringly through the thin screen of her lashes at the player. Each was lost in his sorrow, each savored the pleasure of suffering. It was not of anything very definite they thought, but rather of a variety of things, fugitive and kaleidoscopic. A warmth stole through their veins, as of wine; they responded to the lyric melancholy that swells the breast and clutches at the throat. And when his full rich basso rang out:

*After they had parted us,
When I lay alone,
They brought me broth in little cups
But I would have none. . .*

Pura, applying the words to the little sorrow that dwelt so persistently in her own heart, closed her eyes completely and rested her head on Paco's shoulder. Then she hummed a few notes, warm and throaty as the cooing of a dove, and, taking a deep breath, sang the verse made famous by la Sarneta:

*I remember the day when I pressed
My lips against yours; breast to breast
We lay; I sighed, passion-tossed,
Beloved, I am lost. . .*

They sang verse after verse, *seguidillas* alternating with *malagueñas*, *soleares* with *polos*, depending upon whether their mood was grave or gay. From time to time they drained a glass of wine in silence, then she would resume her position and he would pick up his guitar. Dawn, stealing upon them, found them thus.

WHEN they went out, the sun rode high in a sky of brilliant turquoise blue. Covacha was walking up and down in front of the house, his coat-collar raised, his hands buried in the pockets of his narrow trousers.

The wiry horses, accustomed to long waits at night outside taverns, stood half-asleep, their reins over their withers, their flanks carefully protected by blankets folded in four.

"And now to San Jacinto !" cried Pura, "I mean to say an Ave to the Virgin of Hope. It is a promise I have to keep. After that, you can take me to the Giralda. I am dying to see all of Seville, to breathe it in, to drink it down, to fill my soul with its fragrance."

"A child's whim !"

"You cannot imagine what three years' absence means to a *Sevillana* !"

The carriage set off for the suburb of Triana. Passers-by were few; the housewives, their skirts drawn up, their sleeves rolled, were sweeping the pavement; here and there groups of gossiping women, with spit-curls shaped like shells and pointed top-knots, passed the time of day at street-corners; hawkers of all sorts, on foot or seated on the bony backs of their brown burros, went by, casting meaningful glances and making ribald remarks at the servant girls working on the balconies. A merchant of *alfajores*, cakes of honey and almond, cried his wares in a song rich in trills. Paco pointed him out:

"Look, there's Merengue ! Don't you know him ? He's a street artist; he does not cry his wares, he sings them. He passes in front of my door every day and

though no one ever buys anything from him, he goes on singing simply because Covacha and Gazpacho applaud him. It is not money he wants, but applause ! There's a man for you."

When they had crossed the famous Bridge of Triana, the streets grew more attractive and picturesque. As it was Easter, the *esparto*-venders, saddle-makers and cobblers had abandoned the porches or house doors where they sold their wares; their merchandise, which usually hung on strings or from nails, had disappeared; but the white, clean streets, the little toy-like houses, the flowery gratings, the green shutters, the bird-cages, the happy faces of the little children, playing in the gutter by the score, delighted the eye and refreshed the soul.

The carriage stopped before the side door of San Jacinto. Pura kneeled at the feet of the Virgin of Hope. She was long on malice but short on catechism; she did not believe in priests. Even as a child she had never heard a whole mass through. The divine offices and the dogmas of the church struck her as childish. But her ignorant woman's hopes and her native pride (she was born in Triana) inspired her superstitious adoration of the Virgin of the Brotherhood of Sailors. Her eyes ashine with a mystical light, her face radiant as from some inner glow, she contemplated the Divine *Señora* with rapture. She prayed after her fashion, without ready-made orisons, without

prayers learned by rote; she offered the Virgin her naked soul and sought Her protection and pardon quite without artifice, much as she might go to a kindly mother. Paco looked at her, touched and delighted; he found himself against his will comparing her bright eyes with the dark eyes of the Virgin.

As they left the church, she grasped Paco's arm, and whispered:

"Ah, Paco, you cannot imagine how happy I am. It is all so strange; it is as though I had just been born a minute ago."

Then, as they went to the Giralda, pressing against him, she added:

"I prayed the Virgin to be good to the pair of us and She smiled at me, the darling!"

"Puriya, I know I shall fall head over heels in love with you!"

"I know I am going to give you something I have given no one else in the world."

"What, Puriya?"

As she looked at him, her eyes grew wider and as though wet with dew. She answered gravely:

"My soul."

In front of the Gothic mass of the Cathedral, built by men with the magnificent hope of passing for demented in the eyes of posterity, they stood at the foot of a mountain carved and chiselled in its entirety like a precious stone. Their gaze sought the graceful

tower; they thrilled at the sight of its light balconies of marble, of its delicate mullioned windows, of the arabesques and embroideries adorning and covering it like the rich mantilla of a *maja*. Then, arm in arm, and without stopping, they climbed to the last platform of the Greco-Roman body; they stood there lost in the contemplation of the Andalusian capital, with its massed houses, its tortuous streets, its ancient minarets, its dark convents, its smiling gardens, its distances, and its horizons, singing its timeless, eloquent song in their mind. Joyous as a child, Pura pointed out each building, site and view, fast as she recognized it.

“Look, Paco, the Alcázar, so poor and so stern from outside, so lovely and so precious within. The Lonja, reserved, sulky, free of ornament, severely arrayed as a British widow . . . the Tobacco Factory where I spent two years breathing in dust, and San Telmo over there, with its superb portal as decorative and becoming as a rich comb in the hair of a pretty girl. Look, the Bridge of Triana! Oh, how pretty it is! . . . everywhere burros . . . it’s the burros who make and unmake Seville! Poor little animals, so hardy and patient! . . . More than once, when I was tired and hungry, I thought of throwing myself off that bridge. And I wager you don’t know why I didn’t? I didn’t because I knew you were fond of me and that one day . . . Look at the tower of Santa Ana, the red façade of San Jacinto, red with shame because it is so

ugly, and far away, yonder, the villages of Coria, Gelves, San Juan de Aznalfarache, Castilleja de la Cuesta, Camas, and, on the right, Santiponce !”

“It is quite true I was fond of you,” Paco interrupted, putting his arm about her, “but I knew nothing about it. It was only when you had left Seville that I realized it. Something was missing. I was like a lost man. When I sang and accompanied myself on the guitar, I was always thinking of you.”

Then, after a moment:

“I love you, Puriya,” he cried, pressing her gently to him.

“I, too, love you, Paco !”

Then, seized with a sudden inspiration for which the sherry they had drunk was to some extent responsible, she added, blinking her eyes:

“You a famous bullfighter and I a popular dancer ! Paquiyo, Seville is ours. There it lies at our feet, spreading out its arms to greet us. We’ll conquer it, we’ll make it throb like the strings of a violin, we’ll strip off the gag that keeps it silent, we’ll intoxicate it and be drunk with its own particular essence. Ah, Paco, my love, what I would tell you now if I could only express myself ! if I could only tell what this Alcázar means to me . . . and the Archivo de Indias, the Tower of Gold, those old minarets there, this famous Cathedral with all its treasures, those houses and the people that live in them, so poor and so valiant. . .”

"In Seville," Paco said, warming to her enthusiasm, "everything speaks to the soul and to the senses, everything is witchery, enchantment, wonder. A bandit dies and behold ! the sculptor Gijón uses him as model for a wonderful Christ whom the people recognize and call the thief, *El Cachorro*. The girls brighten their balconies with bird-cages and flowers, and, in a trice, as though by magic, the wretchedness of the town is transmuted to joy. Golden wines turn cares into gaiety, tears into song, song into tears. Yes, everything here is magic and wizardry—the sun, the enchanted streets, the dreamy patios . . . the plaintive songs, the tragic processions, the *tablao*, wonder of wonders. . . O generous earth where the red carnations of passion and grace flower all the year round ! And the greatest of all magic circles is the arena, the Plaza de Toros. Its yellow sand glows like a luminous topaz. This topaz is a crucible where all the qualities of our race are mixed, molten and flawlessly modelled; a mysterious mirror, a magical mirror where we Spaniards contemplate ourselves such as we would wish to be, such as the great *Conquistadores* and missionaries were. It is there that you will see me playing with death and showing the beauty of courage to fourteen thousand spectators. You are right, Puriya ! Seville greets us with open arms, we shall conquer it. Side by side, we shall do great things, we shall accomplish

the maddest dreams. You too, Puriya, you are a magician !”

“Let us realize these dreams, Paco !”

“Let us realize them, Puriya, and let the first of them consist in loving each other to the point of madness.”

The dancer looked about her. Then, her breast heaving, her eyes full of tears, she cried:

“Paco, love of my life ! Seville, love of my soul !”

C H A P T E R F O U R

THE ENCLOSURE formed by the hollow of the *tablao*, on one hand, and the wall of the hall running past the stage to the annex of the café, on the other, was sometimes called the green-room because the artists met there before the first number, and sometimes the witches' bower, because the mothers, who accompanied their daughters and who were at once duennas and maids to them, were accustomed to seek refuge there.

Pitoche, his head bowed, paced up and down the hall. The evening of Pura's début, he had found no opportunity to speak to her. Not once did she glance at him while dancing; she seemed utterly unaware that her former lover stood applauding her. He was, accordingly, much mortified. His pride as lover and artist, as a man accustomed to the deference of his colleagues, suffered from this neglect, especially since Pura had been not only his mistress but his slave, his thing, a sort of tool destined to his own particular use. The reappearance of the woman from Triana, covered

with jewels and radiantly beautiful, cut him to the quick. He stood in his tracks, gazing in open-mouthed wonder at her as though unable to believe his eyes. The art of the dancer and her success crowned his amazement and deep in his soul stirred the smouldering ashes of his old love. Once again, the flower of passion bloomed in the mire of his heart. Yet all the while a discomfort, an ache, such as he had never before felt, gripped him.

Pura was to dance that evening in both the first and the last number. She would therefore arrive early. Pitoche, waiting for her, smoked cigarette after cigarette, his eyebrows arched, the gaze of his black eyes shining through half-closed lashes as through a veil of crêpe, his thin, dark face distorted.

In the green-room stood a horsehair sofa, an old mahogany table, round and inlaid, and several chairs, painted green and adorned with red flowerets. Many photographs of former artists hung on one of the rough wooden partitions of the stage. Most of them, after having known days of plenty and nights of triumph, were now dragging out a wretched existence. Love of pleasure, improvidence, and a complete absence of those qualities essential to the economic struggle, condemned them one and all to the same tragic irremediable end. On the partition opposite hung portraits of modern artists who had sung at the *Tronío*. Grouped about Silverio, king of the *seguidilla* and proprietor of the

café, were El Breva, Chacón, Mateo the Mad, Chato of Jerez, Fosforito, as well as a number of celebrated divas including the gentle Conchilla la Peñaranda, the savage Andonda, Sarneta the impetuous.

Pitoche paused in front of certain portraits, glanced at them for a moment, as though to question them, then resumed his pacing. When he heard Pura's voice, as she came in, talking with her servant, his heart leaped in his breast. "Damn my luck !" he said to himself as he went to meet her, trying to remember the joke he had hoped might disarm her by laughter, "I'll wager she snubs me for my pains !"

"Good evening, Pureta ! Blessed be these eyes that behold you, so pretty, so gracious, so . . ."

Pura's icy stare brought him tumbling down from the clouds. Changing his tone, he stammered:

"I wanted to greet you, to bid you welcome. . ."

"Thank you very much. How are you ? Quite well ? So much the better !" Pura said, as she made for her private dressing-room without stopping.

No other artist enjoyed the privilege of a private dressing-room. In the green-room, there was a tarnished mirror in a shell frame, before which the women might perhaps powder their cheeks or arrange their hair. But this was the extent of their preparations, for they used neither make-up nor rouge, coming in from the street in stage costume, hiding their wide-trained, flounced, rustling dresses under their

shawls. The men, though not without vanity, never even bothered to glance in the mirror.

"She despises me," Pitoche thought in despair, as he sat on the sofa facing the dancer's dressing-room. Her door was half open. The singer, in astonishment, let his glance rove over the walls of the room, newly whitewashed, adorned with huge, colored placards of la Pura, with painted tambourines and rich shawls from Madrid.

In the middle of a drape on the wall, a three panelled full-size mirror stood between a very low divan covered with soft cushions and a dainty dressing-table with a silver dressing-set. There were carnations and roses in cut crystal vases on either side of this piece. Pura sat down at the table and began to polish her nails, while her maid laid out on the divan the yellow satin dress with black silk pompons and the white mantilla that the dancer was to wear for the *sevillanas* in the first number.

El Ñaño, very dapper in his gorgeous clothes, entered, bowing. She looked at him from head to toe, then bade him put on his little round hat, which he carried wrapped in a newspaper under his arm, and said:

"That's very good, Ñaño. Apparently you were perfect last night. Today, when you dance with me, you will have to show them how much better you can be! Smile a shade, let your eyes and mouth speak; unless you do, your hands and feet may fly through the

air but your dancing will lack salt or savor. Don't forget to tell the guitarists to play me Reverte's *sevil-lanas* and to put plenty of style and movement in it."

El Ñaño went out, closing the door. Pitoche heard the sound of a bolt sliding and of curtains drawn. Pura's luxury, her patrician mode of life and her grand habits astonished and alarmed him. All this, he thought, tended still further to widen the gap created between them by the whim of fortune. To consider himself inferior to the dancer at once discouraged and emboldened him. It was very painful for him to realize that this popular gipsy girl, this proud, indomitable woman, was the lowly, submissive Pureta, whom he had first deflowered, then thrown out into the gutter like an old shoe. He regretted his outrageous treatment, not because he repented of the evil he had done her, but because the memory of his harsh contempt might now hurt his cause. Without quite understanding his plight, he knew she could make him suffer and, unconsciously, he adopted the servility of the believer at the feet of a miraculous idol.

"Good heavens !" he wondered anxiously, "am I actually in love with this hussy ? What has happened to you, Pitoche ; what is the matter ? No later than yesterday, I thought so little of her that I had forgotten her name. And today, I'm all wrought up, my head is turned ! Ha, that's a fine joke on me."

He recalled the stupid story of his liaison with Pura, the brutality he had visited upon her, the evil tricks he had played her. Both by temperament and by principle, he had always been fickle, hard. . . It was his gospel that a man worthy of the name must make women suffer, that a woman always prefers the man who breaks her heart. As a gipsy, he was characteristically harsh and unnatural in love yet disposed to lavish sentiment and passion in his songs, which, he said, were made up of so many little sharp, personal sorrows. He was cruel in love and full of tenderness when he sang.

He was called José Ulloa, after his ancestor, the famous gipsy, more widely known under the name of Tragabuches or Firebrand. The latter had first been a matador, then a member of the renowned gang of bandits called the Lads of Écija. This bully, having found his wife in the arms of Pepe el Listillo, the village sexton, strangled the lover, threw the faithless wife over the balcony and buried himself forever in the barren solitudes of the Sierra. His implacable vengeance lent a certain veneer of glory to the singer's name and invested him with a sort of nobility of passion and blood, of which he was more than a little proud. Among the verses of his repertoire, he numbered the following, attributed to the terrible Tragabuches:

*My ruin was caused
By a woman;
No ruin on earth but is caused
By a woman.*

He sang it on all occasions and identified himself with it so thoroughly that, in his eyes, from a popular song, it grew to assume the importance of a passage from Holy Writ.

So absorbed was Pitoche that he failed to note the arrival of Curro Argüello. The latter considered him for a few moments, followed the direction of the singer's somnolent glance, and, crossing the room on tiptoe, sat down beside him. There existed, between Pitoche and Argüello, one of those sombre rivalries to be found only on the *tablao* and so often destined to turn into mortal hatred. Argüello was some forty years old; he felt his faculties declining. The public now applauded him less; evening after evening went by and no wealthy revellers called on him to enliven their diversions. Worse, he never failed at Eritaña or Juanito Castañedo's or at the Pasaje de la Magdalena to hear his rival's voice in one of the private rooms. Once, all of them — *señoritos*, circus folk, and wealthy merrymakers — sought out Argüello; now Pitoche was their favorite. The bitterest blow of all to Argüello was to observe his keenest partisans deserting him for Pitoche. So Argüello spent his life in protesting his

friendship for Pitoche, inviting him to drink constantly, thus to injure his throat and conquer him, if not vocally, then by means of alcohol.

"Well, well," Argüello cried suddenly, slapping his colleague on the thigh, "the fancy lady has worked her opium off on you too, eh?"

"What lady do you mean?" Pitoche asked, feigning surprise.

"Who would it be, fool, except that woman making up in there?"

"If you really must know, I was no more thinking of her than of the Cock of the Passion! I was dozing."

"With your eyes wide open, staring at that door, eh?"

"Well, what about it?"

"You had better look sharp if you want to catch her; there's another vulture hovering about. The fellow makes no bones about it, either. He tackles his women as he does his bulls — straight and smart!"

Then, drawing closer to Pitoche, he added:

"On my way home this morning I saw her drive by with *Señorito* Paco. Do you follow?"

At once Pitoche's heart beat wildly. The other continued:

"They looked like a pair of turtle-doves after a spree! I tell you this because, as man to man, it's the least we can do for each other. Your turn today; it may be mine tomorrow."

"I'm much obliged to you," Pitoche said attempting to jest, in order to hide his confusion, "but I'm not in that boat ! Do you take me for a cur that returns to his vomit ? God's thunder strike me before that happens ! Look me over again, Argüello. I admire Pura as a dancer, but as a woman, confound it, I don't care this much about her." He snapped his fingers. "I'm not the lad this wench can bamboozle with her diamonds, her luxury, and her folderols. And she puts on such swank that soon we'll have to wear a Major-General's cordon to approach her."

"Yes, she's rotten with gold. Look at the earrings and bracelets and rings she wore yesterday. She had at least fifty thousand dollars worth of diamonds on her. And they weren't fake either; they shone like a hundred suns in the sky. By heaven, Pitoche, if you could ever master her, what a windfall for you ! Did you manage to speak to her ?"

"I bade her welcome a few moments ago; that was my duty. We only exchanged a few words. But it's all over now; dead and done for. Off stage, I sha'n't say a word to her."

"That's your business, Pitoche. I simply wanted to warn you and do my duty by you. Look here, is it true they are paying her twenty dollars ?"

"Gospel truth."

"And we get four ! That's what it is to be a pretty

woman and wear fancy clothes. God strike me dead if I don't wish I had been born a woman."

"From now on, I shall get five," Pitouche interrupted unctuously, "I asked for a raise and I got it. After all, it's to their advantage . . ."

Argüello, reflecting that he too had asked but had been refused, flushed with spite and anger.

THE other artists began to troop in. The young women exchanged their kerchiefs for rich shawls and stepped on to the stage, the men following them. The first number was about to begin. As usual, the café was filled with people. Cuenca and Pepe Míguez sat at Paco's table; immediately after the fight that afternoon, Tabardillo and Paco had taken the train for Barcelona where they had another engagement. Cuenca, who had already drunk more than one glass, proved more loquacious and fantastic than usual. He was speaking of the grandeurs and miseries of Spain, of the spiritual renascence in the countries that had exhumed Plato, of the Italian Renaissance, of classical tradition and popular art, all these subjects being closely bound up with the hopes he nourished. He proposed to revolutionize painting, politics, philosophy, and custom — in a word, the whole life of Spain — by returning to classical methods. In his opinion there was no artist greater than El Greco, no painter among

the moderns who could hold a candle to Goya. His own art, at once realistic and mystical, plastic and literary, derived from both these artists; his was a strange style, disquieting, gloomy, grotesque as a caricature, bitterly critical. Juries had refused him a hanging, the public had failed to understand him. He sold little and poorly. The great canvases of his series called *Spain* were heaped up in the abandoned coach-house that Paco had given him in one of his moments of financial embarrassment and where the painter had definitely settled. Here he lived with his pictures as the Knight of la Mancha among his books. In his technique of painting as in his psychological processes, Cuenca fled from the fashionable, the accessory, everything that is governed by contingencies; he sought for the synthesis of art and tradition alone. He cared nothing for impressionism, for landscapes, for background, and for coloring; he painted like a classicist, though, in a certain sense, he remained a modern to his finger-tips.

"I would be a man of another age," he said, "a mystic, a theologian, an inquisitor, a fossil, like most Spaniards, if my epical conception of economic reality and my zest for action did not reconcile me to industrialism, mercantilism, and the other products of our materialistic age—which age, I may add, provides a greater stimulus than people commonly believe."

At other tables, people were arguing at the tops of

their voices. Oaths and vituperation exploded like firecrackers. The exaltation, the effervescence of the arena permeated the streets of Seville and invaded the cafés. When the men argued, their faces grew crimson, their eyes shone like steel, their gestures wrung the necks of words. Sometimes it was difficult to tell whether they were joking or quarreling. It would have looked definitely like a quarrel had not some thrust, some repartee, or some witty sally occasionally passed from table to table, creating general laughter. Raising his voice so his friends might hear him, Cuenca cried:

“The true psychology of the Spanish mind has been laid bare by the geniuses of the brush and especially by those of the pen, who, in the picaresque novel, have plumbed the soul of the people. Cervantes beat them all because, by steeping himself in what is characteristically ours, he revealed not only Spanish futility but also all human futility. His *Don Quixote* is the most profound and complete vision an artist ever possessed of the human condition — that condition at once miserable and divine which allows us to live by creating mirages, phantoms, and will-o'-the-wisps that we follow like madmen. But there — and Cervantes did not mention it — is the source of good and evil. Our illusions fill us with disenchantment — and with hope ! They make us lose our way — and help us to discover a thousand occult ways. They madden us . . . and

they compel us to give a reasoned finality to existence which, without human folly, it would not possess."

Pepe Míguez steered the conversation on to the evils of Spain, which unconsciously led them to discussing politics. Cuenca took three lumps of sugar out of the sugar bowl, and, with utmost gravity, laid them on the table:

"Here is Cánovas, here is Sagasta, and here is Castelar!" he declared, explaining the political evolutions of the three statesmen as fast as he moved the little white squares like pawns in a chess game. . .

The artists were taking their places on the stage. Cuenca interrupted his demonstration. His light eyes, which at times looked almost vacant, were alive with visions.

AFTER Pura had danced the *sevillanas* with the same success as in the *alegrías* the night before, Cuenca, through the intermediary of the proprietor, invited her to drink a few *cañas* with them.

"Tell her," he added, "that we are Paco's friends and that I have a message from him. It is about the loge for the special fight tomorrow. He told me to deliver the ticket to her personally."

Silverio soon returned with the dancer. She sat down at the corner of the table quite informally; the three began to talk in friendly fashion.

At close range, Pura seemed far prettier and more

vivacious. She possessed to the utmost degree that fascinating light grace the Andalusians call *ángel*; but she had also a charm, a winsomeness, a certain distinction of manner and a nobility of poise that redeemed such vulgarity as excessive piquancy might have given her. Her smile, half-angelic, half-wanton, presaged ineffable happiness. Cuenca contemplated her with the eye of an artist, Míguez as a connoisseur of beauty. Each in a definite sense and for different reasons considered the dancer a phenomenon, the ideal of her kind, the Aristotelian entelechy. She suffered them to admire her without confusion or coquetry, like a woman used to the homage and submission of men.

Cuenca gave her the ticket. Then he said:

"What a pleasure to see you dance! Your *sevillanas* are as original and rich as the *alegrías* you gave us yesterday. Where did you acquire that profound understanding of the Andalusian folk dance?"

"I really don't know. Probably from watching people walk and hearing them talk. I feel we dance what we are; and the better we present ourselves, the profounder our art."

"True, true. It is marvellous how your artist's instinct immediately hit upon what I have managed to find only after much groping. Yes, the Andalusian dance shows what we are. But when you dance, it means much more; it becomes a psychological treatise;

it shows us the Andalusian not only as he is but as he would wish to be. Pura, we shall all go to school under you. I said it to Paco yesterday: you will be the Doctress of Ávila of the *tablao*."

"He repeated your words. It's really very amusing," Pura laughed. "Didn't he tell you anything about my vagaries?"

Two graceful dimples twinkled when she laughed. Míguez, with truly Spanish exaggeration, thought: "How gladly would I drown in those tiny wells of light!"

"Yes, we chatted at the Plaza between the fights. To interpret the soul of the *saeta*, of the *soleá*, of the *seguidilla* in a dance! The thing could be utterly wonderful. When will you show us?"

"Whenever you like. The day I come to your studio. Paco promised to bring me. But I wanted you to ask me first. Will you?"

"I should say so. And if I dared —"

"You would ask me to sit for you, eh? Painters are unanimous on that. Of course I will; it's a bargain."

Cuenca's face, half-saint, half-satyr, shone with enthusiasm:

"Really, how can I repay such a favor? I needed the arch-type of the dancer for a scene I am at work on. You've come in the nick of time."

Pitoche walked by several times, trying to attract

her glance, strutting like a peacock in his new suit. But Pura pretended not to see him. At last he sat down, not far from them, with friends.

Míguez spoke of the bullfight; he launched into fervent praise of the Cordoban matador who had completely outclassed the Sevillian. Like Cuenca, he was very keen on bullfighting; he belonged to the club La Garrocha, enjoyed a brilliant reputation as a first-class horseman.

While still a child, he had chased young bulls on his father's estate; but he considered the country only as a place for amusement. Managing the stud and keeping accounts bored him. Pleasure was his most important occupation and his most serious objective. At his mother's death, he had inherited an extensive olive ranch and many acres of farmland which Don Antonio managed for him. The revenue from these lands the young man gaily squandered in the company of bullfighters, singers, and fashionable women of pleasure. His education in Germany did not prevent him from being the most Andalusian of young *Sevillanos*; during his residence abroad, this quality had become more accentuated as a reaction against a background that lacked gaiety and light. As a student, his room was filled with bullfighting reviews, etchings representing scenes with tambourines and castanets; although he had never worn a cape and knife in Seville, he did in Berlin, in order to excite the Gretchens,

he said. Sometimes he rode out wearing the wide-brimmed hat, the heavy coat with reinforced elbows and the leather leggings of the bull herder. He was continually joking; he took everything lightly and heeded only Pastora, his sister, and Rosarito, his fiancée. For the latter he professed a great tenderness, a sort of religious respect. His professors and fellow-students thought him half mad, but they respected him none the less for it, for at bottom he was very generous and had a heart of gold.

The dancer was listening with great attention.

"Do you think Paco can prove his worth beside this colossus?" she asked with a worried air. "I'm longing to see him fight and yet I would like to postpone that day forever. Paco is very proud indeed; the eyes of all Seville are upon him. Everything tends to excite his jealousy; I am terribly afraid he may commit some folly in trying to outdo himself."

"You can be sure of that!" said Míguez, "Paco will play the maddest tricks. Just imagine what this fight means to him. It is the first time he has fought here. He is getting his license; his future is at stake; he has got to prove that he knows his business and that his reputation for bravery and daring is not his friends' log-rolling. He does not need that much incentive to stake his all. El Califa is a superb matador; he looms head and shoulders over the others, but Paco's technique is superior to that of all comers. When Paco

shows what he can do, what he and he alone knows, nobody on earth can match him !”

“I am so nervous, so frightened . . .”

“We all are. It’s the same thing every time he fights. We’re in mortal terror at the Plaza. When he prepares for the death-blow, we close our eyes. We see him gored and tossed into the air; but we are wrong. The bulls never hit him; they spin from his hand like bowls.”

The second number of the programme began. Pura followed the act in silence. As she listened to Pitoche preluding, she looked away from the stage, keeping her eyes on the ground. Cuenca noticed the rapid rise and fall of her breast; she could not hide her emotion, moved as she was by Pitoche’s sobbing voice. She was unwilling to listen, yet she heard in spite of herself; now she felt a violent irritation, now the tenderest pity. Pitoche sang, his new verse:

*Ah love, if you returned
What a change you would find;
I am a new man, I have learned
To be trusting, to be kind,
Tender in love and blind. . .*

Pura realized that all eyes were upon her.

“The fellow has made great strides in his singing,” she said in order to be saying something. She frowned; her heart was bitter, as she thought he might

be so insolent as to pursue her again. When the artists came down from the *tablao*, Pura took leave of Cuenca and Míguez to go and change. She passed by Pitoche, but he might as well have been a thousand miles away. Watching her progress, Cuenca cried:

"Look at her bearing, Pepe. How can you expect the woman who walks like that not to perform a miracle every time she dances? All the history and character of our race is in that graceful, provocative carriage. My hands tremble when I think of her sitting for me. Pepete, I am going to strike a high note; I'll give them the high C. We'll see whether the public at last realizes they've a tenor to sing for them!" Then recalling his past failure, he added with resignation: "No, the public won't notice!"

He was still depressed at his ill luck. The blindness, the bad faith, the incurable, rooted stupidity of the critics exasperated him. He could not comprehend how they could prove so crassly ignorant, so obtuse, so utterly inept.

"Let them discuss the quality of my painting," he said to himself, "that is quite proper. I can understand their irritation at the bitter criticism that springs from my pictures. But that they should not even suspect their æsthetic worth or the moral elements that abound in them — that is too much, that I cannot get into my head."

PITOCHÉ waited a few moments before slipping out unseen through the little door by which Pura had disappeared. Argüello's insidious comment gnawed at his heart, increasing his desire to speak to the dancer and force her to listen. He did not know exactly what to say; he was certain of one thing only: he must speak to her, he must drive out the suspicions and cares that lay so heavily on his heart. Fear of being too late stifled his pride, which urged him to commit follies of all sorts and to stake his all to win all. Pura had just sat down at her dressing-table when Pitoche, pale as a ghost, appeared at the door.

"Here he comes, the fool, ready to blunder again!" she thought.

"Pureta," the singer said, "I ran after you to congratulate you. It must not be like last night; I could not get near you after the first number. Your dance is perfection itself, it's so gipsy, so subtle. You are the greatest dancer in Spain. Nobody has expressed what you do in dancing. There's so much art, so much movement in it! If you knew how happy I am! . . . As happy as though it was myself. Because I'm still faithful to you, Pureta. I acted like a brute, a rotten brute, I know; but that was through ignorance and stupidity. As for love, I have always loved you deeply; I love you even now, in spite of all that has happened. . . Ah, Pureta, I don't know what is hap-

pening to me. Now I see you again, all the past comes back to me, chokes me. It is driving me mad . . .”

He had gradually edged his way into the room and sat down on the divan. Without looking up from the mirror, she answered:

“Thank you for your compliments . . . but please leave me. I must dress.”

“In the name of everything you hold most sacred, I implore you to let me speak. I must positively talk to you. You don’t know, you don’t care to know what is happening to me.”

Pura made a gesture of impatience, then looking straight at him, answered:

“You are wrong, Pitoche; possibly I know it better than you do. I see what you are driving at, I realize you are beginning to hang around me; I find it distasteful and I want you to stop it at once. Things are finished, do you understand, finished for good and all. I am a very different woman now; I am quite beyond your reach, Pitoche. If you have an ounce of common sense, you will understand this and leave me alone. I refuse to have the slightest intimacy with you at any price, do you hear? From now on, it’s ‘good morning’ and ‘good evening’ and that is all. Now you know how things stand.”

“But I’m not asking for anything, Pureta; I simply wanted to tell you that I am suffering because I was so brutal, that I am gnawed by remorse and that you

must not condemn me without listening to me. Let me ask your forgiveness."

"That's granted already: I forgive you. We have nothing more to say to one another. Now, go away!"

Pitoche, growing paler apace, insisted:

"Don't be so hard on me, Pura. I know I deserve to have you spit in my face. Do it as often as you like. Strike me — here!" He raised his head. "Or stab me — a little sharp thrust right in the heart. But do not disdain me — that I could never bear."

"Well, Pitoche, you will have to do as best you can, for disdain you I do. And you're an idiot if you ever believed the contrary."

The *cantaor* was silent for a few moments. At last, with obvious effort, he replied in a tremulous voice:

"You said that you would forgive me but the truth is that you loathe me. Otherwise you would not treat me like this. It is not right, Pureta. Just because I was cruel to you, you need not in turn be cruel to me. God blast my soul if I knew what I was doing! As for you, you do know. O Pureta, have pity upon me. Can't you see how I am suffering? Do you want me to kiss the ground you walk on and eat the dust you raise? I am ready to do it, if it pleases you."

"That is not the point, Pitoche. Your mind is wandering. I do not wish you either to humiliate yourself or to kiss the ground or anything else. What I do insist upon is that you stop bothering me. For you

are wasting your time — and anyhow I would not let myself be persuaded. Let us each follow his way. I forgive you for the harm you did me; I harbor no resentment and I wish you no harm. I should think that was enough, eh ? I shall not forbid you to speak to me, if you really wish to, either in the green-room or on the stage. But I must beg you kindly not to show your face here.”

“Then you refuse to allow me to explain ?”

“Yes, I refuse.”

Pitoche bowed his head; he tried in vain to reply, then rose and shuffled out of the dressing-room, his feet dragging and his back bent as though bearing an enormous burden.

Pura closed the door and began undressing before the mirror.

“Poor Pitoche, how moved he was !” she said, “I’m sorry I was so hard . . . well, more’s the pity ! If I had been sympathetic, I would have been saddled with him for all eternity. It is his turn to suffer now, is it not ? Well, then, let him suffer.”

Then, her thoughts changing, she looked at herself in the mirror. As she took in the matchless beauty of her naked body, she added:

“All this is yours, Paco . . . yours. . .”

C H A P T E R F I V E

SETTING Paco's morning chocolate on the stool, Rosarito parted the curtains gently at first, then, seeing her brother was awake, in one sweep.

"It's broad daylight, Paco ! Look at the sky ! What a sun ! And not a breath of wind. Did you sleep well ?"

"Like an angel. And you ?"

"Fairly well, thanks !"

She kissed him and sat down at the foot of the bed as usual while he ate his breakfast.

"I was rather nervous. A number of things were running through my mind. I thought about you, about Pastora, about myself, about today's bullfight and I don't know what else ! I got up, prayed again to the Virgin for us and listened at your door. I felt relieved only when I knew you were sleeping like a saint."

"I slept like a log for twelve hours."

"Imagine ! But you are quite right to be confident. I'm calm too, now. You will overcome that ordeal

like all the others. I know that God has you in His keeping, Paco; that knowledge keeps me from thinking the bulls can ever harm you. I remember, in the provinces, when I saw you leave the hotel on your way to the arena, blithely puffing on your havana and sitting up in your carriage, cool as though you were off for a drive through the park, I said: 'That bandit will always find luck and women in his favor.'"

He drew her to him, pressed her against his breast, and, caressing her while he spoke:

"Ah, what a flatterer this little sister of mine is! With a sister as attractive as that, who prays so much for me into the bargain, no mishap or bull can ever reach me!"

But Rosarito was not telling the truth; far from being calm, she lived in a constant fear which she was careful to hide from her brother. When, three years before, he had informed her that his mind was made up, she had understood how vain it would be to deplore it and oppose him; instead, she had decided to lavish upon him that tenderness she imagined, with true feminine instinct, the bullfighter must possess in order to surmount the obstacles in his path, to triumph in the struggle and to succeed. She changed overnight. The grasshopper of the fable had become an ant, the bird of paradise an active woman, but without ceasing, on that account, to spread joy through the house. She sang all day long, even while she was

busy. She cut down the staff of servants, reduced expenses, and stopped sending to Madrid for her dresses, hats, and perfumes. She gave up, not without regret, her trip to Court every winter, to San Sebastián every summer; and to avoid feeling humiliated or exposing herself to an affront, she resolved to forego balls and large receptions in Seville. Like Paco, she ceased calling on people but she continued to receive visits from friends who, in spite of their financial ruin and the scandal that followed it, proved anxious to keep up relations with them. Finally, she gave Pepe Míguez, her fiancé, his freedom. Pepe, who was loyalty itself and who loved her deeply, put up a violent resistance, protesting his love. But she was obdurate and put an end to their interview, saying:

“We can continue to speak, Pepe. But I want you to be free; you must not consider yourself bound by your word. You are not the only person to consider. Your father may hold Paco in high esteem, but he is strongly opposed to his daughter’s engagement to a bullfighter. I have therefore cause to believe he is no keener on his son’s engagement to the sister of a bullfighter; and even if he were willing, I would not consent under such conditions.”

Paco was quite unaware of this, just as he was unaware of all the sacrifices and tribulations Rosarito had endured since he began to risk his life in the arena. But often he must surely have suspected, for he would

stroke her cheek without immediate cause, gaze at her tenderly and say:

"Little sister, little sister, your heart is too big. I am not killing those bulls, you are !"

Their conversations at breakfast were a great treat for Paco and Rosarito. Often the stroke of eleven, ringing from the belfry of San Marcos, found them still chatting. They joked a great deal together. Rosarito indulged in numerous sallies of every sort. Her categorical system of judging things provoked laughter for its curious combination of ingenuity and perspicacity. When they spoke of serious things, Paco listened to her with the deepest attention; he admired her accuracy when she spoke of subjects utterly foreign to her experience in life and wondered whence she drew her discernment. When he questioned her, she invariably laid her hand on her heart and said:

"It comes from here."

Then she explained:

"There are two separate ways of judging just as there are two different ways of singing; there are head-tones and chest-tones. Men judge with their brains, women with their hearts. We know nothing and we know everything. If you don't understand that, you are a booby !"

After his chocolate and fritters, Paco drank some milk. Setting the empty cup on the side-table, he asked:

"Do you still expect to go to the arena with Pastora and her family ? They are coming for you, aren't they ?"

"Not both of them, just Pastora," Rosarito corrected, and laughing at his surprise, she added: "She wants to shake hands with you before the fight. You must realize, once and for all, that Pastora is dying to speak to you. She has always loved you. If she has kept up her friendship for me, if she seeks me out and goes about with me, it is all for your sake."

"What about her goings-on with . . . ?"

"That's all nonsense ! She has had a thousand suitors and doesn't care a pin for any of them; she is playing the coquette just to prove to you that your capers leave her cold. But it's no use ! As for you, Paco, it is wrong of you to make her jealous. You cannot blame her for what her father thinks. Incidentally, I might add that her father happens to be quite right. Put yourself in his place. What would you have done, if some fine day my fiancé had told you: 'I am going to be a bullfighter.'"

"I would have answered him: '*Olé !* Hurrah for all young daredevils !'"

"Taratata ! You would have sent him about his business."

"Certainly, I would !"

"There ! You see ? All she could do was to wait for you and love you in silence. Now though she

won't own up to it, because she is very proud, I know she is suffering deeply. When you fight, she ceases to live. She never fails to ask whether I have received the telegram you send me after every fight with the famous slogan: 'All well.' If you could see how pretty she is! They have good cause to call Pastora 'the divine,' like the Virgin. But you're very fond of her, Paco, aren't you?"

"You have no idea how fond I am of her, Rosarito!" he murmured, closing his eyes.

Paco's sword-boy entered, with the swords for the matador to examine, as usual, before he put on his gala costume.

"Are they well sharpened?"

"They can slice a hair from end to end," the servant answered. Then, as if accomplishing a liturgic ceremony, he drew them solemnly from their sheaths one after the other and submitted them to his master. Two of the blades bore the glorious names of the Cid's two swords, so often steeped in the blood of the Moors and so famous in history, not only for their master's exploits, but also because they had been among the rich gifts the long-bearded hero gave to the Infantes of Carrión when they married his daughters. The heaviest was called *Tizona*, and the other *Colada*. The third bore the name of *Joyosa*, in memory of the sword Charlemagne wielded. The fourth sword, lighter and shorter, was a *verdugillo*, and

boasted no other name. Paco used it only for the death-blow. He felt the edge, then the points of the heavy gleaming weapons; he made sure that the curve which bullfighters call the "death of the sword" was accentuated as he wished it, and gave his approval.

"What suit shall I wear, Rosarito? The suit you choose will bring me luck."

"The one the color of wine-lees and old gold. Of the three new ones, it suits you best."

"Did you hear, Gazpacho? Go and get that one out for me."

Rosarito went out, followed by the valet. Paco crossed his hands over the nape of his neck and gazed at the carved beamwork of the ceiling, meditating.

The vast solemn sonorous room had been the bedroom of the Marquis of Torre Cuéllar. The furniture adorning it, including the Portuguese bed with columns and baldaquin, was his. Paco had refused to part with these venerable objects. In order to make up the sum needed to keep the house, he had sold, through Tabardillo, the interesting collections of old Sevillian faiences and *azulejos*, as well as the Cordoban leathers, which were family heirlooms. He also got rid of all the Flemish masters and of a great part of the sumptuous though somewhat worn furniture in the drawing-room and the dining-room. Besides the Marquis's bedroom furniture, he kept only what was strictly necessary to maintain a certain air in the house.

The dull tones of the heavy curtains and of the faded, sometimes threadbare, damasks that covered the walls were a perfect match for the old Alcaraz carpet, the red Muscovy leather of the armchairs, the woodwork of the complicated cabinet, shiny with use, the Italian commode inlaid with mother-of-pearl and shell, and the Salamanca bureau which filled the space between the doors. Only two paintings hung on the wall, a Christ by El Mulato and a yellowish, austere monk attributed to Zurbarán.

After breakfast, when Rosarito had gone, sitting in the dim, rich light of the room, Paco liked to submit to a sort of examination of conscience. At such moments, like the Alpine climber who has reached the crest of the mountain, he scanned the horizon which the future revealed. In a single spurt, he had scaled the summit of his art, and, on the way—save for an occasional jolt from a bull—he had met with only profit, applause, and pleasure. Fate smiled upon him; fame yielded without resistance, like a woman won. Money fell like manna from heaven upon him. The memory of his thwarted love for Pastora was the only shadow marring his happiness and the only wound to his pride. He could not forgive the young girl for her submission to paternal authority nor the father for telling him: “Paco, I respect you, but if you become a bullfighter, you will have to abandon all claims to my daughter’s hand.” To which the sensi-

tive bullfighter replied drily: "Well, I have done so." The break, begun with Míguez that day, grew worse; relations between the families were intensely strained after their famous altercation in the *Tronío*. They ceased to bow to one another. Paco's words deeply vexed the haughty lord of one half of Andalusia, whose whole pride, whose honor even, lay in the savagery of the bulls he raised. Again, Don Antonio was used to general approbation and especially from the bullfighters, who needed him and who feared the harm he might do them, if he wished, both in and out of the arena. Paco's arrogance infuriated him; he determined to humiliate Paco by public affronts, which Paco met with a contempt that proved even more withering. Thus a fierce antagonism sprang up between these two haughty, obstinate, and pugnacious characters; but the great lord was too chivalrous to involve Pastora, Pepe, or Rosarito, his god-daughter and protégée. Harsh and tyrannical towards strangers, he was kindly, even weak towards his children, for he adored them, satisfied their least whims, considered that their mere parentage conferred privileges upon them. Far from angering him, Pepe's indiscretions and dissipations filled him with a secret pride. Pastora's grace and beauty flattered his vanity as an Andalusian father. The universal recognition of Pastora's supreme popularity in the social world gave him the same pleasure as seeing his bulls outdo all others

in the arena. Save on the rarest occasions, he allowed Pepe and Pastora to act with complete independence. So, after his quarrel with Paco, it never occurred to him to associate them with his difference, nor did his affection for Rosarito diminish in any way. The family relations continued unaltered. But the day he and Pastora broke their engagement, Paco ceased to go to the house, though he continued to see Pastora in secret. The girl dared neither defy her father's authority openly nor break completely with her fiancé. She hoped Paco would abandon his bullfighting plans at the eleventh hour. When he fought his first fight and the attendant scandal inevitably occurred, they quarrelled. Don Antonio took his daughter to Madrid where she was fêted and wooed by the leading young men of the nobility. Pastora had numerous flirtations, Paco many noisy adventures. Two years passed. If they chanced to meet, they scarcely knew what to say to each other. But their eyes spoke for them. Paco recalled these fugitive interviews, which filled him with an unaccountable anxiety. Each feigned indifference. The young man knew that under her satin and lace a heart beat proud as his own. Yet he felt impelled to converse with her in terms now gentle, now harsh. Lately he had often seen her in the Delicias or in the gardens of the Alcázar where Pastora strolled almost every morning with Rosarito. Paco never

stopped to talk to them; he bowed politely and went on. Pastora paled and bit her lip.

"A PLAGUE on all care !" he said suddenly, jumping out of bed. Then, dressing quickly and slipping a few lumps of sugar into his pocket, he went down to the stables. Covacha had finished washing the carriage; he was humming *tarantas* with many a trill, while cleaning the heavy collars, mounted with bells, the brass pieces and the broidered leather of the Jerez harness. Likewise singing, but basso, the stable boy was adorning the mane and the tails of the horses with aiglets and bright yellow-and-red top-knots. Cuenca was prowling about here and there, as he usually did in the morning before taking up his brushes. The two friends generally met in the stable at that hour, for love of horseflesh created an additional bond between them. Cuenca owned no horse but he rode Paco's and spoiled them as though they were his own.

"Hello there, Cuenca !" Paco cried, as soon as he caught sight of him. The painter advanced, seized Paco by the shoulders and, after a brief glance, pressed him against his breast without uttering a word.

"Thank you, old Rufus," Paco said, aware of the feeling behind the other's shy gesture.

For a while they watched Covacha, examining the yellow leather and the adornments of the Jerez har-

nesses at length; they slapped the necks of the horses and fed them sugar. Magnificent beasts, these horses, of medium height with stout backs, wide girth and extremely thin of leg and head. These saddle horses also acted as carriage horses. The two mares Paco rode in the country were known throughout the farms of Seville for their courage and training. Riding Perica, Paco could chase bulls without having recourse to bit or voice. The intelligent animal sensed the intentions of its rider. A fine sight indeed to see it attack when the *garrocha* stuck in the bull's crupper, or protect or free itself from the horns by a bound to one side while the beast turned about, never fleeing, always facing the bull squarely, even in moments of mortal danger. Paco also owned a colt, which Brageli was now training for him. He would ask about it every day when the trainer came back from his daily run with the superb animal, the colt's mouth full of foam, his belly streaked with spur marks.

"How is the job going, Brageli? I see the rascal is at last beginning to mind you."

Brageli, emphasizing every point with a gesture, replied:

"That nag's mouth is like silk; he can turn, walk backwards and step sidewise—but I haven't been able to put his head in place yet. That is why I have not taken the twitch off him. And he doesn't step,

as well as he might, nor as well as I want him to. Look for yourself."

He put the colt through its paces in the little courtyard making it turn in all directions, while he explained its slight faults and how he proposed to remedy them. As a trainer, Brageli was matchless. His equitation was flawless, he loved to show off his ability, dash, and swagger; no movement of his but proclaimed the smartness, the manner, the stylized presumption of the Andalusian horseman, skilful, graceful, and magnificent. The two friends enjoyed seeing him use his spurs with the classical assurance of the Sierra Morena brigand and strut like a turkeycock when he had made his mount turn, like a matador after a sensational thrust.

"There is another artist in elegance and daring!" the painter said to Paco, half-jesting, half-serious, while Brageli displayed his dexterity. "At this moment the fellow thinks himself just as good as José María, the famous bandit, or as the Cid Campeador. In his veins boils the rich blood of the knights, bandits, and bull-fighters who fought in the lists, on the battlefield, in the sierras and in the arena. There is no use wriggling out of it, Paco, we are all alike. More than any other part of Spain, we have inherited the cult of valiance in its quintessence. Not a single Sevillian who is not dying to prove his audacity and his grace, with sword,

spurs, guitar, or skillet. Good old Brageli, there, is a rival of the Count of Puñonrostro, of the Duke of Veragua and of your kinsman the Marquis of Torre Cuéllar, of whose exploits in the arena Pedro Romero himself was jealous. Look, Paco, watch him swell with pride. Observe with what heroic impetuosity he excites his mount; see the cold sharp blade of his glance directed at invisible spectators to convince them he is a man, a real man. If you don't tell him to get off that horse, he will throw himself on the ground to make us acknowledge the fact."

"Quiet, quiet," Paco laughed. "If Brageli heard you, he would jump out of his skin. That's enough, Brageli, all right!" he cried, as the trainer in his enthusiasm made the animal stumble several times.

Brageli dismounted. He used both hands to adjust his coat with a great gesture; he hit the colt a ringing blow on the crupper, sending it bounding down the road to the stable, and moved towards the two friends.

Paco praised his adroitness and offered him a glass of *Rute* to "wet his whistle." Then, as he asked for news of his family:

"Curra and the girls are well," Brageli answered, "but as for Pulida, things are growing worse every day. That rascal Argüello, not content with getting the money she earns, humiliates her in public. He beats her black and blue and throws her out of the house, naked, without rhyme or reason. Yesterday

she came home to us like that with a black eye."

And with the utmost naturalness, as though he were discussing a perfectly common event, he told them a thousand details about his daughter's miserable existence with the singer. For the last ten years, they had been living together in a narrow airless room at the Jabanillas, a court almost exclusively inhabited by artists of the *tablao*. The money both earned by their singing, Argüello spent for wine and gewgaws, which Pulida considered perfectly justified, because she loved him and liked to see her man amuse himself and show off. Sometimes they had not enough to eat. As though it were her fault Pulida paid the piper. They quarrelled frequently. Oaths, moans, cries rang out. The tenants, accustomed to such scenes and knowing from experience how they ended, would go out into the court or into the corridors and make a noise themselves, so that no one outside might suspect what was happening; but never for a moment did they dream of interfering, obeying the adage: "Each for himself and the devil take the hindmost!" This was the law of the house; any violation would have exposed the offender to serious unpleasantness. The would-be saviour was invariably crucified. "The storm is over!" they would say when the noise ceased. Then they went quietly back to their hovels. A strange stillness followed, a mysterious silence reigned in Argüello's and Pulida's room. An attentive listener

would have heard only a caressing murmur, a faint sigh; he would have seen that the room was quite dark, which was rather unusual. Argüello and Pulida emerged on to the street together, their arms around each other, like lovers.

But their quarrels did not always end so peacefully. At night, when the singer came home after one glass too many, things were quite different. Then the furious bully chased his woman out of the room and locked the door. She stood outside, trembling with cold, moaning. After a long wait, Argüello magnanimously tossed her a blanket and returned to his bed, having closed the door, without, however, locking it. When she knew he was asleep, Pulida re-entered and stole softly to the fragrant, warm bed. This warmth, this faint acrid odor gave her a sharp, bitter pleasure which made her at once happy and ashamed. But since Pitoche had begun to surpass him, Argüello had become so unmanageable that it was almost impossible for Pulida to go on living with him. He took a malicious joy in offending her in her vanity as a woman and an artist, calling her insipid and false and throwing up to her precisely what the public said about him: that she had no style of her own, that she imitated this man or that, that everything about her *cante* was wrong. Hearing her hum a *malagueña* of Pitoche's absent-mindedly one day, he had been on the point of killing her.

"I have decided to interfere, and if I interfere . . ."

Brageli concluded.

The arrival of Paco's *banderilleros* interrupted him. They came to greet the *mataor* before the fight. Once they had been novices and had fought in villages; Paco raised them from obscurity and transformed them into real bullfighters. They were nicknamed the "lightning team" because they decorated the necks of bulls with four pairs of *banderillas* in the twinkle of an eye. In the arena, they were always on their marks, they did their duty indefatigably. They wore fobs, rings, and buttons of precious stones; although small of stature, they believed themselves handsome and posed as Don Juans. When they passed in front of a mirror, each walked on tiptoe in order to appear taller than his companion. The first time Paco used them in a fight, he gave them twenty dollars — a fortune to them — which they hastened to squander on cigarettes and silk socks. Thenceforward they were in their seventh heaven, with no notion in their heads save to cut a fine figure in the arena or in town and gaily to spend the money they earned at the risk of their lives. But this last detail did not prevent them from sleeping soundly.

Tabardillo and his companion, the picador Alegre, followed. The latter was respectfully called Don Juan, because he was almost fifty years of age and in his youth he had been both an accomplished horseman and the most skilful, dogged picador in Spain. He

was a presumptuous, dissipated man; although already well on the downward path and on the eve of retirement, he had laid nothing aside for his old age. If somebody brought this to his attention in a friendly way, he flipped his hat back on his head, put his fists on his hips, and, bending his body forward, declared:

"I love three things — wine, cards, and women; I shall sacrifice my very last penny to them. When I am broke, I go down into the arena. So long as I can pike, all will go well. The day I can't, let them bury me; I'll have had a damned good run for my money."

In the stable patio, paved in Moorish fashion, the group talked excitedly. Covacha served some old sherry, red with age, which Paco liked to drink before meals. The *diestros* took only a glass of brandy; they did not drink much on days when they fought.

"*Mataor*, they're keeping out a sly Míguez bull for us, tall as the Cathedral of Burgos," Alegre said. "Christ! he weighs a thousand tons. And his horns! Didn't you see him at Tablada? He looked even more imposing in his stall. Don Antonio's nobody's fool!"

"All right, you'll see the mules drag out the Cathedral of Burgos, Alegre!" Paco answered smiling.

"I know that so well I had forgotten to mention it."

"One thing you mustn't forget — and you too, Ta-

barda ! — Turn your pikes and give the first blow with the butt. That's a slap in the face for the breeder. I promised him I would do it; I must keep my word."

"Well, there are some fine tumbles in store for us !" cried Alegre, "but we will do as you wish, *Mataor*." And tapping Tabardillo on the shoulder, he added:

"The pharmacists will run out of arnica today, brother !"

They continued to jest with the somewhat boastful gaiety of bullfighters who have yet to learn what fear is. Although aware that the fight would prove a great test, the five men were quite calm and intensely eager to distinguish themselves, each in his province. Alegre himself, who nowadays never attacked save with a bunch of chaplets and a fine length of pike, proposed to execute some of his classical thrusts, just as he had done in the arenas of Madrid and Seville in the old days to defend his title. Suddenly Paco rose and ceased laughing:

"Come, gentlemen, it is time to dress," he said. "Today I am taking my license. Not only do I intend to cover myself with glory but I want my quadrille to do so too. So be sure you draw your girths tight, lads !"

Banderilleros and picadors, one by one, stood before Paco, taking their hats off as they shook the matador's

hand effusively and wished him good luck in a few feeling words. Then they moved off, swinging their arms and showing off their figures with that supple, proud gait that in Seville makes of walking a subtle art.

C H A P T E R S I X

AT ABOUT two o'clock in the afternoon, the bullfighter's friends, followers, and admirers came to attend the ceremony of his dressing. They were for the most part enthusiasts; Paco's dressing was an episode in, or at least a preliminary to, the fight. If they were not present, they considered the spectacle incomplete. But this time the crowd was so great that almost all of them had to be satisfied to shake hands with the *señorito torero* and go away. The rooms, halls, and patio were black with people. It was as though all Seville, including the authorities, had made his house a meeting-place, wishing to bid the hero godspeed before he set out that day to write one name more in the glorious annals of bullfighting, in that art of courage, which, according to a popular song, springs from Heaven. Cuenca and Míguez were forced to clear the Marquis of Torre Cuéllar's bedroom to allow his descendant to dress. By a special dispensation, only his intimate friends from Madrid and Seville remained in the room. Paco, who had gone out

to change, returned, his hair dressed, his face clean-shaven. He took off his dressing gown, with the complete absence of false shame inherent in an athlete, and stood quite naked. He looked like a figure carved out of hard wood. His dim tawny skin, almost innocent of down, covered his fine body like an *écru* silk jersey, his muscles almost lax, yet, at his slightest movement, standing out in bold relief. His friends examined him as they might a thoroughbred horse. Gazpacho, bustling about his side, helped him on with his Valencia silk shirt, his short drawers of fine linen, the white stockings and the flesh-colored ones which he wore over them and finally his new shoes which he laced with meticulous care.

"Splendid, Paco, splendid," Don Gaspar cried, as he saw Paco's gala costume on the bed, "what a cape ! Who in the world embroidered that marvel for you, my boy ?"

"Some nuns who love me, bless them ! Do you like it ? I shall put it on for the first time presently."

"It is superb. If you fight as well as you dress, you will wipe the other matadors off the map !"

Paco made no answer; he devoted all his attention to the difficult and delicate operation of rolling his wide sash about his waist. Gazpacho held one end while Paco, whirling around, wrapped it about him. In the beginning, he stopped at each turn to modify the folds. When all but two yards were around his

waist, he turned swiftly several times, the silver band wound completely about him.

"It couldn't fit better if it were painted on you," Cuenca said.

Before donning his heavy, glittering coat, he put on his toque, seizing it by its heavy tassels and cramming it on his head. As Don Gaspar watched him standing there, fully dressed, his supple body adorned with silks, gold, and precious stones, so proud he looked, so handsome, that he seemed the living incarnation of the grace and manhood of Andalusia, a symbol of what is most substantial and profound in the Sevillian soul, a perfect specimen of the race which has given the world its Gonzalos de Córdoba, its Pizarros, and Cortés. Raising his glass, he said half smiling, half moved:

"Paco, you will revolutionize the whole art of bull-fighting. You will revolutionize Spain. You will stir the ashes over our earth; some of them are perhaps still warm. Out of these you will kindle a flame. I drink your health, Paco."

"Bravo, Don Gaspar, bravo!" Cuenca exclaimed, his face radiant, "I was thinking exactly the same thing. Your health, Paco!"

"Gentlemen, please, please. Don't make me believe I am to save Spain like Pelayo at Covadonga."

"There are many kinds of Covadongas in the life of a people, Paco. In your sphere you can become, you already are a providential man. Those who take

you for simply a Society bullfighter can see no farther than the ends of their noses," Cuenca replied gravely.

Rosarito, pushing the door to her room ajar, asked:

"Do you want anything?"

"Yes, darling! . . I want to kiss that charming little face of yours. Come, push it through the curtains."

"You child! Come in here a moment, will you?"

He obeyed her and, entering her little sitting-room, found himself face to face with Pastora.

"Paco, I wanted to wish you luck. Even though you don't really deserve it, I still think of you tenderly. In return, you. . ."

He took her two hands, pressed them against his heart and trying to smile:

"Feel it beating, Pastora! Do you feel it? That thump, thump of my heart says: 'I love you, I love you!'"

"Paco, Paco," she murmured, love and despair in her glance.

He understood.

"No, don't say anything. Do not scold me with your eyes! How beautiful they are — so beautiful that they frighten me."

"You are playing with your heart and mine; it's a dangerous game, Paco. You had your choice between fame and me; you preferred fame, needlessly, capriciously, purely for the pleasure of playing with life. Your costume is the shroud of our love!"

Her voice echoed like the numbers of a muted chant. Hers was the face of a Murillo Virgin, the figure and bearing of a Goya *maja*. As she spoke, her black velvet-soft eyes shone; a faint blush covered her pale cheek like a magnolia petal. Her eyebrows, her eyes, and her hair, dead black, emphasized her strange virgin whiteness; her lips, red as strawberries, contributed a touch of sensuality.

"Pastora, O divine Pastora !"

"Much good it does me !"

"Aren't you happy ?"

"*You* ask me that ? How cruel you are, Paco ! You know quite well how much I suffer for your sake. Well, I can bear it no longer, I shall do something desperate. . . Listen, Paco, I *must* speak to you. It's very serious. Meet me at the Farmers' Club dance this evening; I shall tell you all about it. Will you come ?"

"Of course, I will !"

"*Señorito*, it is time to go !" Gazpacho called from the other room.

Just then Rosarito came in, wearing her short dress and her mantilla with black silk fringe, and her wide comb; standing by Pastora, she looked slighter, somehow, and frailer. Pastora strove to master her emotion:

"Paco," she said (she had been about to say, "Paco, darling" but she controlled herself), "I shall see you

later. From the bottom of my heart, I wish you good luck."

Rosarito cried, pale and trembling:

"My heart tells me you will fight like a god."

Paco could not speak; he stretched his arms towards them and each rested her head on his chest.

The oratory was in a small cabinet next to Rosarito's room. The young girls stepped in. The long yellow candles of the altar were lighted. An ancient Virgin, with silver crown, bared her heart pierced with the seven swords of pain. Pastora and Rosarito fell to their knees sobbing. Through the solemn darkness of the room, in the gay, smiling beauty of their Andalusian costumes, they looked like two bouquets of flowers laid at the foot of the altar.

Meanwhile Paco walked downstairs, shaking hands right and left. A great crowd stood in the street — young girls, charmingly gowned under the traditional mantilla, looked down at him from windows and balconies. His gala cape over his left shoulder, puffing on a havana cigar, Paco, affecting an air of detachment, took the best seat in the carriage; Don Gaspar sat down beside him, Míguez and Cuenca opposite. They all felt dizzy with pleasure and anxiety. Gazpacho jumped on to the box where he had already laid the capes and swords. Covacha, wearing a new Cordoban hat and a new suit, had acquired a whip with an enormous butt. He pressed the reins; the carriage

set off amid cheers from the spectators. The horses spanked proudly forward under their luxurious harness; their hoofs struck the ground with a smart, stirring rhythm. A blazing sun laid filigrees of gold, now sparkling, now dull, on the silky flanks of the noble animals. Glittering on the tooled leather, on the buckles and top-knots of the Andalusian harnesses, it spread a sort of thick, luminous varnish over everything. A number of carriages followed Paco's, forming a gay procession. When they entered the Calle de los Reyes Católicos, a rain of huzzas and *olé*s fell upon them from the flowery gratings, from the *mandas* and carriages that passed at top speed. The bullfighter, bowing on all sides, held his toque constantly in his hand. This display of pomp and arrogance would have seemed pretentious and out of key in any other man; but the public applauded it in Paco because he had always been a dashing *señorito* and because, at the moment, he embodied not only the archetype of headstrong youth but also Seville's secret hopes in the arena. The crowd was at once delighted and moved at his audacity in pitting himself against the stars of bullfighting and at his display of pride and courage. It was as though he were saying: "I am the man who drives the public wild!"

"There is grandeur for you! There's guts!" the Sevillians thought as they saw him pass, smoking his big cigar as though nothing unusual were happening.

"Hop, hop, Perica !" Covacha cried from time to time cracking his whip. The rich *majas* turned their heads, as they passed, to catch a glimpse of the bull-fighter. Some smiled at him. Brageli, on horseback, prouder in his saddle than an emperor on his throne, rode alongside of the carriage and, taking his hat off as he made a curvet:

"Hurrah for pomp and the man who invented it !" he cried.

Paco smiled, doffed his toque, waved with his hand. The pride of living surged through him as never before. The public display of sympathy, the admiration of the men and the smiles of the women intoxicated him. He felt prepared to defend his laurels against God himself, to fill Seville with terror and delirium, to offer it, while he played with death, an unforgettable, a unique spectacle. Yet he remained calm. No shadow of depression mitigated the joyous sense of completion that swept him headlong. He knew that his courage would respond to the greatest heroism circumstance might demand of it. Not for a moment did he consider the possibility of a setback. He trusted in his star — he had chosen the fairest for himself — and, not with a gambler's blind faith but with an assurance born of his own powers, he felt he was riding to a triumph.

"Hop, hop, Perica !" Covacha cried again and again.

For the moment the coachman would not have exchanged his whip for a king's sceptre.

A carriage drawn by a magnificent pair of Romero greys drove by quickly. The superb *maja* seated in it advanced as through a dream, her eyes fixed on Paco's carriage. As she passed, she leaned out, thrilling with joy, and waving her fan at the bullfighter, she cried:

"Good luck to you, Paco."

"Thanks, Puriya !" he replied, bowing, his toque against his heart. A wave of emotion, infinitely sweet, swept over him; with eyes shining, he followed the progress of the white mantilla as it moved off beating like the wings of a dove. Then he thought of Pastora as he looked unattentively at the flowery houses, the rows of trees, the vehicles passing amid a din of bells and cracking of whips. Noisy groups were making for the Plaza. The water-venders and ice-cream peddlers, men selling roasted peanuts, nuts, pralines, almonds and cream-puffs set up a deafening clamor as they cried their wares. The coachmen yelled in chorus: "Look out there ! Move on !" and flew past like a whirlwind.

The trees were decked with new leaves; so brilliant shone the sun that it seemed a new planet. Alegre and Tabarda, riding on horseback and in picador's dress, advanced with a magnificent, detached air

through the crowd, their chinstraps tight over their chins, their right hands on their hips.

"Look out ! Hop, hop, Perica !" Covacha clamored incessantly.

The carriage stopped in front of the door of the passage leading to the *chiqueros*, where the bulls are locked, within the courtyard reserved for the horses. Paco exchanged a warm handshake with his friends, and saying, "We will meet here at the exit, good-bye, gentlemen !" he went into the Plaza, with Gazpacho at his heels bearing swords, *muletas*, and capes.

"Our heroes were hewn out of the same block !" Don Gaspar commented.

"Our saints and our bandits, too," the painter added with a laugh.

Míguez asked, "Are the men we need today — bankers, manufacturers, captains of industry — chips off the same block too ?"

"In his way Paco stimulates their energy," Don Gaspar answered gravely. "He too is a man of destiny."

"No one knows what we lack," Cuenca said, "but the faculty of arousing enthusiasm, zeal, and ardor has never lain within reach of everyone. Others must direct these forces."

"That is the problem. What do we lack ? If we knew, we would sing a very different song," Don Gaspar sighed.

As they talked, the three men mingled with the

human torrent that rushed headlong toward the sea of the arena.

THEY took their places by the barrier of the Section 2, where the bullfighters spread out their gala cloaks after the parade of the quadrille.

"What a mob ! The crowd is so thick you couldn't squeeze a pin in," Cuenca said, his hungry eyes traveling over the boxes and tiers.

As always, he tried to absorb the swirling colors before his eyes; below, the yellow and red of the arena; in the centre, the chequered effect of the crowd; above, the brilliant azure of the sky, sifted in places by clouds so thin, so transparent as to resemble exquisite *guipure* lace laid over the silk of space. In the boxes, mantillas with black fringes or of white lace, elaborate combs, carnations, and flame-colored roses, sparkling, beckoning eyes, mouths of blood and snow were so many expressions of the spirit and beauty of Andalusia. Manilla shawls, thrown over the ledge of the boxes, looked like plots of flowers. Glances winged over delicate necks, hovered over graceful décolletés, stuck to them like flies. The sun shone directly down upon the arena. There was a buzzing as of bees. From time to time an amusing remark, an apt comment stirred the whole Plaza to laughter. The air was torrid. Fans fluttered in the loges; on the tiers, in the sun, wine-skins passed from hand to hand. On that

side, the shade of their wide felts cast dark masks over the men's faces. The shawls the women draped about them, and their blouses, stood out in colorful relief against the dark background of the crowd. Black crêpe de chine mantillas glittered with changing colors as the light fell upon them. The heads of women with heavy carnations in their hair fluttered like butterflies.

From the vault of the horses' patio, Paco watched the imposing spectacle. The other bullfighters, smoking cigars or cigarettes, examined the *señorito* with respectful curiosity; they knew he passed for a man who risked his all inside the Plaza or out. His social rank, his energetic character, his reputation for splendor, his firm, purposeful way of expressing himself met with their approval, indeed with their respect. When he talked to Paco, El Califa himself felt ill at ease; for all his glory, he felt that the younger was the better man.

"There is Pastora," Paco mused, "how pretty she is ! Not a *maja* by Goya or Fortuny can match her beauty !"

He watched the exquisite young girl, Rosarito and another friend, whom he did not know, as they took their seats in the front of the box, while the famous breeder of bulls sat down behind them. Paco frowned. "I've a bone to pick with *him* !" he thought. He looked away; his glance roamed over the various

boxes; at last he discovered Pura. He grew wistful; a thousand thoughts stormed his mind at once; the swift incidents of his extraordinary career floated before his vision. The memory of his ardors and endurances in the perilous art of bullfighting mingled with the sweet names of Pastora and Pura.

"I wonder if I'm not in love with the pair of them!" he said to himself suddenly. "There's no doubt about Pastora; I have always loved her and always considered her as my fiancée. And I love her still, in spite of her father's opposition. Why does Pastora insist I abandon my profession when she knows I need money, a great deal of money, if only to be able to marry her? Imagine me in the rôle of Prince Consort! And with the father's pretensions! I'd rather swing on the gallows. Whereas Pura makes no demands whatever; I am certain she would love me regardless of my position. That is true love! The rest is simply. . . But what about me? Do I love her? Do I? I really can't tell. It may be something different; but she attracts me, she attracts me more than. . ."

Then, his thoughts drifting:

"Here's hoping the Míguez isn't a murderous bull. Bah, I'll send him into the next world like the other, with a clean thrust to the hilt."

At four o'clock the President of the *Corrida* took his place. A bugle blew. An electrical current ran through the public; Paco trembled, not with fear but

with pride and determination. Tossing away his *havana*, he made the sign of the cross and joined his companions.

The alguazils, municipal officers clad in the jerkin and short-coat of Philip IV's age, saluted the President and took their places at the head of the procession. The band struck up a lively popular *paso doble*; the classical procession moved forward amid the cheers and applause of the crowd. The idol of Seville advanced on the left, the idol of Córdoba on the right; Paco walked between them, prominent because of his figure, the dashing way he had draped his cape over his shoulder, and his proud, noble gait.

Unable to contain his enthusiasm, Cuenca brought his hands together and, as through a megaphone, shouted:

"*Olé ! Hurrah for all brave señoritos.*"

"*Olé, olé !*" people repeated in various quarters of the Plaza.

Pastora and Rosarito saw him advance; they grew pale, trembled. La Trianera rose to her feet watching him, breathless. He walked with his head high, his brows slightly knit, his eyes fixed on the President's box. Having reached the foot of the box, the matadors brought their heels together and removing their toques, bowed very low. The *banderilleros* followed suit. The picadors, doffing their hats, revealed their resolute faces, their sleek hair, their locks, thick as

gipsies'. Then they exchanged their gala cloaks for their fighting capes. Paco sent his to Rosarito, who with Pastora's help spread it out over the edge of the loge; the public, following the progress of the *señorito's* cloak and seeing it in the hands of such attractive *señoritas*, clapped respectfully. They blushed red as pomegranates. Then, sighing, they resumed their places.

The picadors grasped their pikes and galloped around the arena, their wretched nags moving without the slightest co-ordination. Again, the bugle rang out and after several seconds of anxious waiting, the first beast, an Orozco of winy brown, nervous and swift, bounded into the arena. This beast the idol of Seville was to yield to Paco, thus conferring the license upon him. Paco watched it with that intense concentration a bullfighter brings to bear upon the beast destined to him. After a few rushes, the bull stopped defiantly in the middle of the ring. Paco, advancing, "called" it; the beast rushed forward. Paco let it draw near; his cape folded over his arm, he avoided it with a movement full of grace. Manoliyo tried to "level" it with a series of serried passes; but the bull, undaunted, escaped. "Picking it up" in the nick of time, Paco attacked without giving it respite, then after a half-pass abandoned it, looking as though he were carrying off the beast's snout in the folds of his cape. The crowd burst into applause. The beast, without

ever escaping, took eight pike-blows and gutted three horses. The matadors ran to the picadors' rescue with a fine bravery; the public realized at once they would struggle for supreme honors with utmost rivalry and vigor.

"Devilish good, all three of them !" the experts decided.

In his last attack, Tabardillo suffered a fall and lay exposed; the matadors rushed to his rescue. But they did not know how to bring it about, since the bull stood between the picador, his horse, and the barrier, turning its fierce head now in one direction, now in the other. Suddenly it charged the picador. Paco, braving the peril, covered its head with his cape, hoping to attract it towards him; but the beast plunged its horns into the horse's belly, lifted it high into the air, then turned towards Tabardillo, who rolled over so as to avoid it. El Califa leaped over the nag, gave the bull a loud thump on the crupper, forced it to turn half-about by clinging to its side, and, fanning it with his cape, brought it towards the centre of the arena, where, after a very close pass that harassed the beast and rooted it to the soil, he turned his back on it when almost between its horns. With infinite calm, he walked slowly towards the barrier amid a thunder of applause.

In a turn of the wrist, Paco's *banderillo* adorned the rounded withers of the beast with three pairs of darts.

The bugle sounded its death; Manolo moved towards Paco with sword and *muleta*, to deliver them to him according to rite and to confer upon him by this ceremony the matador's license. Paco came forward to meet him; when they stood face to face, each came to attention, bowed, and took off his toque.

"*Señorito Paco*," said the idol of Seville as he presented him with the "instruments of death," "may you have great luck with bulls and may they bring you only profit and glory."

"Thank you, Manolo; I wish you the same," the young man replied, taking the sword and the *muleta*. They shook hands and Paco walked towards the President's loge to dedicate his first bull to him.

Seeing him almost under her loge a moment before he went forth to risk his life, Pastora grew deathly pale, closed her eyes.

"In the name of Heaven, be calm ! He will see you !" Rosarito said, taking her hand. Pastora hugged her nervously; then, covering her face with her fan, murmured:

"Rosarito, Rosarito, I feel I am dying."

"So do I, Pastora, but we must be brave."

When, after dedicating the bull, Paco stretched forth his arm, and, describing a rapid circle, threw his hat into the air over his shoulder, pivoting violently on his heels to gain additional force, the two *señoritas*, putting up a brave front against adversity, rose and

applauded. Salero and Templáito ran the bull to the place chosen for the death. Paco came up quite close to the beast, stood at attention facing it. With a parade of bravery and assurance, he drew his sword from under the *muleta*, unfolding the latter over the beast's head and stood his ground, waiting. Then, careful to blind it with the red rag, he executed a rounded pass in which the bull seemed to wind itself about him like a scarf, completing it with a second pass at the breast, barely drawing his chest back as it rushed forward. The crowd burst into delirious cries. In the midst of the tumult, a piercing voice screamed:

"At last, the star of stars!"

"What bravery, what calm!" Don Gasper said. "You were right, Cuenca, his style of fighting is unique." Then watching him play with the *muleta* without moving an inch from his adversary's ground, avoiding its horns by a miracle, he added, "It's true; he frightens one. I have never seen anyone brave a bull like that. Look, the man and the bull are one figure. He is going to get him. . . *Olé!* another breast pass! . . . a natural pass, a twirl between the horns. . . Christ, it's uncanny!"

"Look at *that!* What about *that?*" Cuenca repeated at each pass.

The bull stood back at an angle; Paco rolled up his

muleta; the connoisseurs, realizing something stupendous was about to happen, rose:

"Is the *señorito* holding a reception today?" a wag shouted, punning on the word *á recibir*.

Paco smiled, turned his head and nodded affirmatively. The two stars left the barrier, obviously worried. An intense emotion gripped the crowd; a silence reigned, pregnant with anxiety. Paco turned as though to look at his profile in a mirror, raised his sword on a level with his eyes, bent his head a little above the blade, and, a moment later, "called" the bull resolutely towards him by advancing his left foot and literally touching its snout with the *muleta*.

"Come on, my lad!"

The beast bounded forward, its head under the material. Bringing his feet together and describing the classical cross, Paco "threw back" the beast with an extraordinary clean thrust, burying his sword to the very hilt. The beast rolled over like a ball. Paco stood motionless, his right arm raised in the attitude of a gladiator. A tumult rose amid the crowd, hats and cigars poured down at the matador's feet; pale but smiling, he walked towards the President's loge, bowing right and left.

"There he is, the star of stars! Grovel before him! Everyone flat on his belly!" the stentorian voice repeated.

"Seville has a real matador at last !" cried another spectator.

Rosarito and Pastora had covered their faces with their fans to hide their tears.

"Paco, Paco, Paco !" Pura murmured, exhausted, incapable of any word save his name which she repeated over and over.

Cuenca and Míguez had yelled themselves hoarse.

"Ah, gentlemen," Don Gaspar cried, jubilant, "if we could put that emotion, that fever into life ! What is there about the arena to stir us like this ?"

"I feel it, I know, but I cannot find words to express it," the painter replied, "the arena raises us, it transfigures us because it resuscitates the energies and virtues of our heroic past, because it revives everything that once made us great and strong."

"At this moment we are all delirious, we feel capable of carrying the universe on our shoulders," Don Gaspar added, watching the enthusiasm of the public. "Look at these faces. Only heroes and great artists can excite such emotions."

While the mules dragged the bull and the dead horses out of the arena, Paco, hat in hand, walked around the arena saluting the cheering multitude. The second beast was already in the arena before the ovation was over. Paco hopped over the barrier and joined his friends, who shook his hand effusively:

"Give me a drink ; I am dying of thirst."

Cuenca passed him the dainty little gourd he always brought to the Plaza.

"Paco," Don Gaspar said, "you fought like a god. At last I can boast I have seen a bull 'received' with all the sacraments, just as the bible of bullfighting teaches us it should be done. My boy, I owe you an afternoon I shall never forget."

"The 'beastie' was a noble one, Don Gaspar," Paco said carelessly as his glance followed El Califa, who at that moment executed a brilliant pass. "What a superb bullfighter!" he added. "How superbly he plots every move he makes! Since the beginning of bullfighting, there was never a more finished bullfighter. And I'm not forgetting Frascuelo and Lagartijo."

El Califa was determined at all costs to show Seville that he was the master. He fought between the horns, always dodging adroitly; he executed the most difficult passes with magnificent sang-froid, trifled with his adversary, and forced vociferous cheers from the crowd that had come determined to hiss him. For his part, the Sevillian was playing a calm game; he attacked coolly, at close quarters. But while he risked a goring, even allowing the bull to jostle him, he could not manage what the other did with ease and safety.

Thus El Califa, single-handed, adorned his beast's withers with three perfect pairs of *banderillos*; then

he worked the beast with his *muleta* in masterly style and taking up the position for the death-blow, dispatched it with a colossal *volapié*. To a man, the crowd realized it must give in to the inevitable; no rival could ever hope to wrest the sceptre from the giant of Córdoba. The favor of the public, changing suddenly, grew hostile to the champion who had just disappointed it; all the bravos were for El Califa. Paco himself did not obtain the applause he deserved for his work in the *quites* (a bullfighter's manœuvres to save a comrade in peril) or for the marvels of valor he was forced to perform in order to cut a good figure beside the master. The public, swept away by the Cordoban's skill, elegance, and temerity, seemed to have forgotten Paco's thrust, the feat matadors never attempt nowadays, "because they have no guts" said the connoisseurs. Before the entrance of the sixth bull, poor Manolo sat on the step of the barrier and wept for mortification. Paco passed in front of him, frowned, and, standing in the centre of the arena, waited for the onrush of the bull he was to kill. It was a great six-year-old with enormous horns.

"That's a pretty little present my father-in-law is sending me !" he said to himself, and turned to glance defiantly at Don Antonio's box.

The monster plunged into the arena, skirting the barrier and almost caught Templáito, who threw the first cape at it. It ran zigzag, it would not let itself

be tricked, it made straight for the body. The peons could only run it from shelter to shelter; the sly beast scorned their cloths, as though it had fought before. The spectators, who knew what had occurred between Paco and the breeder, began to protest.

"That lad may turn the public against me !" thought His Excellency Señor de Míguez, trying to hide behind Pastora and Rosarito.

"Did you teach that animal to speak Latin so it might understand Paco, my dear godfather ?" Rosarito asked maliciously.

"I sent him a bull worthy of the name, to give him a chance to display his talents," Don Antonio answered, wounded to the quick:

"For my part, I thank you for your kind intentions."

"I think you have raised a fine row this afternoon, father," Pastora said laughing.

Pepe Míguez, ashamed at his father's trick, lowered his head.

Paco bit his lips. He looked now at the bull, now at the breeder's box. Suddenly the beast rushed upon him. It seemed to the young man as though a mountain were crumbling upon him. He spread his cape and, though the beast inclined heavily first to one side, then to the other, he executed a pass without moving his body. At the second pass, he felt he was struck and fell on his back. The bull turned about and would have gutted him, save

for the timely intervention of the Cordoban who literally covered the beast's head with his cloth. El Califa managed to draw the monster away, but attacked in his turn when he least expected it, it was Paco, already on his feet, who, this time, came to his rescue. The public gave them a noisy ovation and turned angrily towards Don Antonio. Many called on the President, urging him to withdraw this murderous beast. Paco pale with fury signalled to the public to keep calm and to leave the beast in the arena. To clinch the matter, he threw his toque at the bull and waited for it, arms crossed. Astounded at this act of rashness, the crowd remained silent.

"God help us, what is the boy going to do now?" Don Gaspar said, rising to his feet.

"You'll see how to hold a public in the hollow of your hand!" Pepe Míguez declared, closing his eyes.

The bull rushed forward with a murderous fury; Paco, trembling with anger, watched it advance. The gold and silk of his gala costume flashed never so bright as Paco's eyes.

"Come on, come on, I'll give you what you're asking for, bandit!" he thought.

He executed a pass so swift and deft over the head of the beast that, as it was about to gore him, it lost its balance and fell on its side. Paco promptly took several steps backward and stood his ground waiting. The bull leapt towards him again. Letting it ap-

proach, Paco executed a fresh pass from the other side without parting his feet. The bull's snout swept the ground. As it rose again it was panting, with its tongue hanging out. The cheers of the excited crowd redoubled. Paco heard nothing; his blood boiled within him. He cried to the picadors:

"At him, lads, and don't forget what I told you !"

Alegre advanced, testing his lance. As he reached the beast, he turned it around and, to the stupefaction of the public, parried its attack with the butt. The bull raised horse and rider on its horns and threw them heavily against the barrier. Attacking in his turn with the butt, Tabarda received a terrible blow and fell unconscious to the sand.

"Picadors, picadors !" the public howled deliriously. Alegre climbed into his saddle again, spat in his hand, tossed his beaver towards the stands and crying, "In your honor !" as he advanced, step by step with much swagger towards the beast, he dug his pike with so much force into the beast's flanks, thoroughly in earnest this time, that his horse fell, its entrails dripping and the rider toppled over on to the neck of the bull. The two matadors rushed forward to save him. Seeing the picador on the ground, about to be gored, El Califa seized the monster's tail and Paco clung to one of his horns.

"*Olé*, brave men ! The *señorito* is invincible," an enthusiast cried out.

Far from feeling intimidated by the formidable strength of the bull and the terrible falls they were risking, the excited picadors vied with each other to spear the bull, as the matadors did for the *quites*. A rider had no sooner fallen than another succeeded him. The raging beast disembowelled nag after nag; the Plaza shook with the applause; roses of blood flowered in the arena and on the cheeks of the fevered crowd. A gust of heroic exaltation filled men's breasts and twisted their mouths into tragic grimaces.

"Stick to it ! Hold hard ! we have him !" Paco said to the picadors.

The horsemen threw themselves on the fierce beast, its horns ripped open the horses' bellies, the picadors' lances pierced the bull in the neck.

"Horses, more horses !" the public shrieked, drunk with excitement.

After a brilliant final pass, El Califa removed his hat and without letting it go, put it on the bull's head, while he stood in this dangerous position for a moment or two. With a beast of this sort, whose only aim was to gore, this was pure rashness. In the parade after, Paco yielded so little ground as he executed a *veronica* — a pass with the cape very close to the bull's head — that the animal formed a narrow circle around him while it aimed furious blows at him. To complete the pass, making the most of the animal's shock, Paco

placed one knee on the ground and scratched the bull on the brow.

In the boxes, on the stands, at the barrier, the people screamed as though they had suddenly gone stark mad. When the bugle blew for the *banderilla*-play, six horses lay in the flowering arena.

The Cordoban took Paco's right hand and together, saluting the public which acclaimed them, they walked to the edge of the barrier and sat on top of it. In the first part of the fight, thanks to the work of the matadors, the bull had proved brave, though murderous; now it did not wait to show the perfidious intentions of its "caste." Try as they would, Salero and Templáito could plant one pair of *banderillas* each, only by going at it diagonally and escaping. To attack it face to face was impossible. Paco, El Califa, and Manolo watched the beast's tactics carefully. The bugle blew. Gazpacho presented the *muleta* and sword to the matador.

"Give me Tizona !" Paco said to him.

"What are you going to do with this blasted bull ?" Manolo asked.

"First of all dedicate him to my young sister; then we shall see."

Manolo and El Califa looked at each other in surprise.

"Don't forget it's a very dangerous animal," the

latter said, "finish it with a thrust in the neck; that is all it deserves."

"Bah, all the beastie needs is to be stood up to!" Paco replied, as his eyes sought his sister.

The people in the stands, realizing he was about to dedicate the bull, wondered if the impetuous lad had lost his mind. For a bull is dedicated only when it has given proof of nobility and when the matador believes he has a chance of appearing to advantage. Paco, standing directly under Don Antonio's box, brought his feet together, and holding his toque in the air, his back straightened arrogantly, underlining each phrase with a motion of his arm, he cried in firm, ringing tones:

"Rosarito, little sister, I am about to kill this bull in honor of immortal Spain, in honor of the beautiful girls and proud lads of my country, and *olé!* to your loves and mine!"

He threw his toque so hard that it hit the ledge of the box.

The beast stood in the centre of the ring; its fierceness dominated the arena. Paco uttered the sacramental phrase:

"Back, all of you!"

Manolo and El Califa were whispering together; they took their stand some distance away. Don Gaspar, Cuenca, and Míguez rose in their anxiety.

"Look here, what does he think he's going to do?" Don Gaspar repeated.

"Why don't they run the bull?" someone asked.

"He wouldn't let them," others replied.

"He wants to show the breeder that the honor of a bullfighter is not a vain word and he will prove it, too," a spectator explained to those who were talking behind him.

And, a prey to the liveliest anxiety, the three friends saw Paco walk up to the beast, cool as a cucumber, and strike an attitude in front of it as though it were made of wood.

"He couldn't be calmer," Don Gaspar said. "That lad faces peril and death with the valor of Spain itself—the Spain of Charles V and the *Conquistadores*."

The bull looked defiantly at the brilliant immobile object standing before it; then suddenly it sniffed and made a half-turn, moving several steps away; finally, turning round once more, it returned to the same insolent position. Paco did not budge.

"He has frightened it," the crowd repeated laughing.

Paco, approaching slowly, tested it with his left hand. The bull took a step back. Paco passed the *muleta* from one hand to the other, then thrust it under its snout. The bull took another step backwards. It would have nothing to do with the material; its

eyes were fixed on Paco's stomach. Noticing this, Paco smiled:

"If you speak Latin, I do too. You'll see, you tramp!"

And wrapping its head completely in the *muleta*, while from below he dealt it a resounding kick full in the snout, he cried:

"Come on, my darling!"

The beast attacked violently. Paco executed a breast pass, clinging to its side. At each play of the *muleta*, the animal, whose bones cracked, turned about furiously, goring the air viciously; matador and bull formed a single epileptic ball. The fringes and pompons of his coat leaped in the air; the scarlet rag rose and fell impetuously.

"At last, he has him, he has him," Cuenca shrieked, beside himself, "*Viva España!*"

A deafening clamor arose from the barrier, the stands, and the boxes. *Olés* and huzzahs burst like bombs. Such feats as Paco brought off had never been seen in the arena; the bull and Paco were having at each other unmercifully; the thing was a dogfight. Pompons and fringes continued to fly through the air; one half of Paco's coat was torn into shimmering tatters. A rent in his trousers showed his white drawers. After a very difficult *muleta* pass, the bull stopped. It stood motionless, "squared." Taking his time, Paco rolled the rag and stood sidewise, raised his

sword on a level with his eyes and rushed upon it impetuously, just as the beast too plunged forward. Paco fell on its neck, buried his sword to the hilt in its soft flesh and was thrown on his knees in the violence of the shock. The bull turned about looking for him. Then, drunk with courage, mad with heroism, realizing that the moment had come to offer Seville the spectacle of the superhuman daring it expected from him, Paco, instead of rising, spread his arms in the form of a cross and swelled his chest in an attitude of supreme defiance. The faces in the stands were distorted with excitement, pupils dilated; exclamations, oaths, cries of horror, then a clamor of delirious joy rent the air. The bull had rolled over, its hooves in the air. The matador stood over it proudly, his brow knit, his head high, like Don Juan before the statue of the Commander. And, as if the frenzied mob had suddenly and unconsciously established an intimate relation between the atheist's indomitable bravery and the rash courage of the descendant of the Viscounts of Miranda, somebody first, then a thousand voices in unison, took up a phrase that rang over the entire Plaza: "Don Juan Tenorio is born again!" while his most enthusiastic admirers invaded the arena and ran towards the matador to carry him on their shoulders in triumph.

To Paco the riotous crowd acclaiming him seemed a single creature, an enormous monster, a monster

with a thousand heads, with a thousand fulgorant eyes, with a thousand bloody mouths, and with a single heart — a heart which he, Paco, had urged to beat, a heart which was beating for him only.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

MEETING Paco in the pavilion of the Farmers' Club, Pastora said nervously and rapidly:

"I have been looking for you for the last half-hour. Let us talk; we have no time to lose. Ah, Paco, if you bear me the slightest love, you must make up your mind to face things squarely. I can't face it any longer. For three years now my life is no longer a life. I quarrel with Father constantly because of you. He wants me to get married at all costs, and as I send all his candidates about their business, it means endless quarrels. At present he is so furious at you that I can't imagine what will happen to us."

Paco smiled.

"Because I kicked his bull and ordered my picadors to turn their pikes, eh ? . . . Well, tell him from me that I shall do the same thing to every bull he sends me."

"Paco, Paco, you think more of your pride than of our love. You should not stir the rancor that unfor-

tunately exists between the two of you and grows deeper every day. After all, remember he is my father and your sister's godfather; Rosarito and Pepe are in love with each other and you can do them a great deal of harm."

After he had taken Rosarito home, Don Antonio, furious, had said to Pastora:

"From now on I am strictly opposed to any dealings between you on one hand and Paco and his sister on the other. I hope that is quite clear. That young man takes a pleasure in hurting and insulting me. To attack my bulls with the butts of their pikes! To defy me by kicking them in the snout, into the bargain! I'll make him pay for that. Even Rosarito has begun to show her teeth. Did you hear the little thrust she gave me at the Plaza? They want war—very well, they shall have it. On the other hand, you know the Count of Peñablanca has asked for your hand in marriage; you know he knows of your former engagement to Paco. Let us have no equivocation; you must settle the situation once and for all. Your present life is a dismal waste of time; I am very much annoyed about it. I do not wish to force you into marriage but you really should know that if you accept the Count's offer, as I hope you will, all my ambitions will be crowned and I shall be very pleased. If you were to refuse through some vagary or because you feel some attraction to the other, I would respect your wish

against my own desires, yes, very much against my will. But so long as I live, I shall be opposed to your marrying or allowing yourself to be wooed by a vulgar bullfighter. I do not wish to let our relations go any further. You shall give me your answer to-morrow without fail."

"What do you expect to tell him?" Paco asked, when Pastora had finished.

"That I have loved you, that I love you still, and that I shall always love you."

"Pastora!"

"But that does not help us. You too must make an effort to save me from this inferno. If you were only willing, everything could be arranged. At bottom, though my father thunders against you because you hurt his pride, he likes and admires you. Today when you killed your first bull I heard him murmuring that you were superb. Listen, Paco; make your peace with him. Ask him for my hand, tell him that if he insists you are quite ready to cut off that pigtail hanging over your neck."

Paco was stupefied.

"It means a sacrifice, I know. But do I not deserve a sacrifice from you?" she concluded. Drawing close to him, she wound the twin charm of her provocative smile and her caressing glance around him. He took her hand and said:

"It is because of you that I cannot do it. How can

you expect me to ask for your hand, after the Count of Peñablanca, when I can give you nothing of what he offers, nor even assure you the comforts to which you are accustomed ? How can I give up bulls while I am not wealthy and famous enough to be worthy of you ?”

“You are already famous, Paco. And I know that you have bought back La Barrancosa with its pastureland, stud, and so forth. That is more than we need to live decently.”

“True, but I have debts. I need a great deal of money to put me back on my feet. Only the bulls can give it to me.”

“Well then, what are we to do ?”

“Love can accomplish anything, Pastora. When love is sincere, it needs no permission to manifest itself. To submit it to conditions is to belittle it. Shall I speak frankly, lay all my cards on the table ? Well then, I want you to love me more than anything in the world, with your father’s consent or without, whether I wear a bullfighter’s costume or not. To ask for leave to love seems to me heresy; to impose conditions on love, a sacrilege. I could win your love in any tournament but I could not beg for that love at the church door. I love you, that is enough. What do I care about the opinions or wishes of others ?

“But you are different; you are not frank; it hurts and vexes me; I resent it. Pastora, Pastora—” his

voice was pleading, "love me as I am. I feel I was born to offer my fellow countrymen a great spectacle. Leave me my dream. To try to rob me of it is to stab me in my heart of hearts ! If you continue to oppose it, in the end I shall have to consider you an enemy of what is most typical of me, of my true self, of the real Paco Quiñones ! Without the intoxication of danger, the madness of playing with death, the admiration of the people, their applause and my triumphs, life would be a dull thing to me ! Before I fought, I did not know this; now I do. Love me as I am, Pastora. Don't think of me as just an ordinary bullfighter; try to realize that I am not only seeking success and money, as I myself imagined but a few days ago. Perhaps I risk my life for more intimate and powerful reasons; perhaps bullfighting is the truest expression of my thoughts and feelings. Pastora, I beg you from the bottom of my heart, if you really wish to be my wife and helpmate, love me as I am."

She lowered her eyes. There was a silence. Then, sighing:

"Ah, Paco, this is a funeral in which you give me no candle to bear. You love yourself; you love me for yourself, not for myself, as I hoped and as you should. I don't mind telling you quite frankly that your selfishness rather disgusts me. I, too, have my grievances; if you have your pride, I have mine. How

could I make a half-hearted lover happy? I have done all that was humanly possible. For your sake I have rejected, and I shall continue to reject, whatever titles, riches, and vanities all the counts and marquises of this world could offer me. Will you, can you, give up the profit and glory of your career for my sake? Please tell me quite honestly. Do not be afraid of hurting me. Now is the time for truth."

The girl's imperious tone irritated him.

"Pastora, you do not love me. You do not love me as I am, which is the same as not loving me."

"Answer my question, Paco!"

"I am willing to give up what you call the profit and the glory of my career when I have gained fame and fortune to lay at your feet."

"I do not need them; with you, dry bread and water are enough for me."

"I do. If I had not fame and fortune, the gap between us would be far too great; I would feel humiliated. I would rather die than marry you under those conditions."

"Is that your last word?"

Their glances crossed like rapiers.

"Yes, Pastora."

"Good-bye, Paco."

She turned on her heel and moved away.

A few minutes later, seeing her chatting with the Count of Peñablanca in a remote corner, Paco ap-

proached a little Marquesa from Madrid, a gay, dazzling creature, and began to make obvious love to her. They had been in tête-à-tête quite long when a group of friends joined them. Don Gaspar, having kissed the lady's hand, said to Paco:

"We want to see Pastora dance some *sevillanas*. You are the ideal partner for her. You know she is a wonderful dancer."

"You want *me* to . . . ?"

"Yes, you. Pastora told us she would dance with you because you get on together so perfectly. And the crowd is anxious to see you dance too. Rosarito and Míguez will make up the figure, the guitar-players are there already."

"Oh yes, do, please, you must," the Marquesa insisted.

Paco hesitated. Then, seeing that Pastora eyed him with an air of challenge, he rose:

"As you will," he said.

And once again Pastora and Paco found themselves face to face. Guitars and castanets played their best. A wave of lyricism and popular emotion swept over the stiff, formal company. They formed a circle around the two couples. The four dancers, Pastora especially, were reputed as excellent, even among the common people, who had often seen them dance in the booths and pavilions of the Feria. Her nostrils twitched, her lips trembled; Pastora gazed through

moist eyes at Paco, curiously, as though taking the measure of an enemy against whom she was about to match her strength. Paco's lips were smiling though his brow was knit in a frown.

*You loved me, you forgot me,
You loved me once again. . .*

sang a *señorita*. The young man saw Pastora's lids droop; she smiled through half-closed eyes, raised her arm, as though stretching her body voluptuously, and with perfect grace executed the entry of the *sevillanas*. She was dancing not like a young girl but like a mature woman, alive with hidden intentions and calling all her powers of seduction into play. At every turn, with every move, with each play of her foot, whenever she drew herself up, flashed her eye, or darted a provocative smile, she seemed to be offering Paco the wealth of her body and saying: "Look at what you are losing !" He had never seen her dance with such passion, nor make such a display of her charms. Shocked at first, he began to partner her without enthusiasm; but her provocation soon excited him and he threw all the skill and ardor he possessed into the dance.

"The girl is extraordinary !" the men murmured.

The ladies were more reserved in their comment. Some thought Pastora's dance too bold; others declared she was dancing not like a lady but like a pro-

fessional from the *Tronío*. At bottom, they were all jealous because the men, especially the older men, devoured her with their eyes. During the last figure, Pastora said in a low voice:

"Farewell, Paco."

"Farewell, Pastora," he replied in the same tone.

Then avoiding the effusions of his friends and the curiosity of the women who, anxious to meet the hero of the day, were being presented to him in groups, he picked his way stealthily through the crowd and left the dance.

"Well, that is over and done with forever!" he said to himself, deaf to the din in the booths, to the music from the little shows scattered through the Feria, blind to all but the picture of Pastora saying:

"Farewell, Paco."

She seemed to be fastened to his sight. A wave of jealousy and of sensuality invaded the tender affection he had felt until then towards the young girl. He was thirsty; he knew a need of wine and love. His friends from Seville and Madrid had told him they would wait at Eritaña to celebrate his triumph, after the ball, with a tremendous party. But as he climbed into his carriage, he drove not to the famous roadhouse but to the *Tronío*.

The last number was over. Paco made for a private room, ordered some N.P.U. sherry and wrote a note to Pura:

Puriya,

Shall we have supper together alone? I have come to fetch you because this evening I can be happy only with you. I am waiting for you.

Paco.

He drained two glasses of wine in succession, then lighting a cigarette, paced up and down the room, his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the ground. To-night he wore evening clothes which sat as smartly upon him as the bullfighter's short-dress. His was not the severe inconspicuousness of the English, but the virile, sophisticated chic of the Spanish nobleman. His clothes came from London; he had ordered them five years before but wore them tonight for the first time since he had turned bullfighter, this ball being the first he was attending since that fatal decision. At such theatres and public functions as he had attended, always he had worn the short-dress; it was in short-dress that, when fame had come to him, he was welcomed to the clubs which he was beginning to frequent once more. To everyone, Paco had ceased to be a fashionable *señorito* who had embraced the bullfighter's profession; he was now the spoiled child of fortune, the prototype of what was most essential in Andalusia.

"*Olé!* Hurrah for the gipsy lord!" Pura cried as she entered. Then laying her hands on his shoulders, looking at him with admiration and tenderness:

"Paco, Paco," she exclaimed, "you almost killed me with pleasure and fear. I was ill as I left the Plaza. My boy, Spain will go mad over you."

"Really, you liked me as much as all that !"

"You cannot imagine how I felt. I've never known what I went through; I wanted to cry and I wanted to laugh; one moment I thought I was buried in the depths of a black pit, the next, rising to heaven in the arms of the seraphs. Everybody felt like that; the men flabbergasted, the women quite insane."

"Were you insane too ?"

"More than anyone. As though you didn't know that, wretch !"

"Yes, I do know it, but I shall never tire of hearing it."

"Ah, Paco, I lost my heart that night at Mother Curra's. What is it in you that turns our heads so ?"

"The demon of Andalusia in my body," he answered, his teeth flashing, "which is no more than an uncontrollable desire to astound the men and win the love of all the women."

"Devil !"

"And yours in particular. But it isn't I who make them mad," he added seriously, "it is the arena. Ah, Pura, the arena electrifies us, it transfigures us, it turns us into legendary heroes. I am convinced that in its enthusiasm the public imagines the bullfighter is Spain and the bull Destiny; that it grows delirious when it

sees a man calmly defy the beast and, laughing at its fury, beat it, conquer it, and in the end, lay it out dead at his feet. What reminds us so vividly of our ancient valor transports us and enraptures us. Perhaps the man who evokes all this fulfils a high mission. I felt this intuitively; but I really and truly understood it only that day you explained what your dancing meant to you. As I thought over what we said that evening (do you remember ?) and then, at daybreak, at the Giralda, I suddenly knew myself much better. I saw more clearly in my soul; I divined what the people expected of me. It is to you I owe a great part of my triumph today, Puriya. So instead of going off and dissipating with my friends, I came here, filled with love and gratitude, to celebrate with you. For I think you the only woman who can love me and understand me as I want to be loved and understood."

She grasped his head between her hands and drinking in his soul through his eyes, "Paco, Paco," she whispered, "I don't know how the others love you, but I feel something here that tells me I love you more and better than anyone !"

"You love me though I am a bullfighter, eh ?"

"I love you for all that you are, for all that you bear in you; because I like you in short-dress or in evening clothes, because when I am with you, I am another woman, a woman capable of a great, a very great love."

Their avid mouths met in a kiss. Paco felt her swooning in his arms; an infinitely pleasurable rapture, a joy too acute for words filled his heart and swelled his breast.

"Puriya, Puriya, I love you, I love you from the depths of my soul. I have never loved like this," he whispered in her ear. "I hold you in my arms, I feel your heart beating against my heart, I feel the contact of your divine body and that immense voluptuousness does not drown my infinite sadness."

"That is how I would have you love me. That is how I love you myself. Ah, Paco, that is happiness!" she murmured, pressing gently against him. "To feel oneself not brutally desired but loved. Ever since I met you, I have wished and hoped that you would love me thus. Paco, my Paco, *Paco de mi alma*, I wish I were sixteen and a virgin so that I might give myself to you body and soul. That is impossible, alas! it makes me suffer, it tortures me night and day. I am so afraid I am not worthy of you. Yet you may take my word; in spite of everything, in spite of my miserable life, this Pura who loves you has never belonged to anybody, but only to you, to you. . ."

"I know. That is why I loved you, why I love you now. I know to anyone else you have never been, you never will be what you are to me. Only you have the faculty of drawing out of me what is integrally, purely, and wholly myself. That is what I want

to be. From today on: you, the bulls, and nothing else ! That will be my whole life."

She raised her head, gazed at him wide-eyed."

"Paco, you've broken with Pastora, haven't you ?"

"Yes, for good and all this time."

Then offering her a glass of wine and drinking his, he added:

"Let us drink to our health, Puriya. Let us drink to our love, which will be the fairest and the finest in the world because it will exhale the fragrance of pale-gold sherry, of red carnations, and of the blood of the bulls !"

Their lips, trembling with passion and moist with wine, met once more in a deep, long kiss.

In the rooms next door, the arpeggios of the guitars, the stamp of heels in cadence, *olé*s and the clapping of hands resounded. Suddenly Pitoche's vibrant, anguished prelude reached them like a plaint. They parted and sat down on opposite sides of the table. As they looked at each other, Paco saw Pastora and Pura saw Pitoche.

C H A P T E R E I G H T

CUENCA was working feverishly. He had begun his portrait of Pura six weeks ago; now he was putting on the finishing touches, those masterly touches that give a picture what salt and spice give a meal. Clad in a skirt with train and furbelow, her red shawl draped over her breast, the dancer posed conscientiously. Without ceasing to paint, Cuenca recited, for her amusement, passages from the *Romancero* or related gallant feats of chivalry during the wars of Christian and Moor. Paco's engagements kept him almost constantly away from Seville; in his absence, the dancer's sole distractions were her chats in the studio with Cuenca and the visits they paid to churches, public monuments, and museums. She never wearied of watching, admiring, and especially of hearing him orate upon things which invariably swept her off her feet, even if she did not quite understand them. There was nothing of the pedant in Cuenca; he spoke with the curiosity of an artist who was well-informed and passionately concerned with

anything that betrayed a touch of humanity, and in particular, of Spanish reality. This also thoroughly interested Pura because of her dancing. Contact with artists and people of culture had given her a taste for art and the desire to learn, not through reading (books fell from her hands) but by keeping her eyes and ears open. Cuenca was as synthetic and categoric in his observations as in his painting. With a deft phrase, a timely anecdote or a pithy comparison, he would sum up the personality of an artist or the soul of the period. She liked animated, substantial talk of this sort far better than all the long dull speeches in the world. On their first stroll, the painter showed her what vestiges of the Roman Conquest were still preserved in old Hispalis. At the feet of the Columns in the Alameda, he recited the romance of Sepúlveda which, agreeing with the chroniclers of Alfonso the Wise, states that these columns were placed there by Hercules. He showed her the ruins of the imposing wall, crannied and flanked with wide towers, that defended Cæsar's city against the covetous invader; stopping before the Gate of Córdoba, he told what events took place in its fierce tower and in the neighborhood: the imprisonment of Saint Hermenegildo, the martyrdom of the divine potters, Saint Justa and Saint Rufina, the scenes in the famous Capuchin convent, hallowed by the memory of Saint Isidro and Saint Leandro and by the mystical inspiration of Murillo. As they

strolled, he showed her a place covered with dandelions where, according to legend, a sibyl foretold his assassination to Julius Cæsar if he returned to the Eternal City, wherefore the Romans, when the dismal prophecy was accomplished, gave ancient Hispalis the name of *Civitas Seville*, the town of the Sibyl. Then, seated under the shady arbor of a roadside inn at the foot of the ruins of Italica, he declaimed the famous Ode of Rodrigo Caro, while they quenched their thirst with cool, fragrant *manzanilla*. Then came long visits to the Alcázar, to the Cathedral, to churches with Gothic portals and Arab minarets. Cuenca was much amused by her childish curiosity and her hilarious comment when she passed judgment on some work of art; the painter's irrepressible spirits and his sparkling ingenuity delighted her and at times thrilled her.

"How amusing the ugly fellow is !" she thought as she listened to him.

When Paco was in Seville, la Trianera would go with him to nearby villages where, being unknown, they could stroll about unmolested. They would lunch at the first inn they came to, among drovers and muleteers; arm in arm like lovers they would visit the curiosities of the place: some old Romanesque church or a palace that had belonged to a noble family, now extinct or déclassé, with its escutcheon falling to pieces, its balconies of wrought iron, its portal studded with

bolts, or a solitary patio or a façade in baroque style. Paco was not so learned or fluent as Cuenca, but Pura found much charm and aptness in his comment; his remarks, always more or less concerned with themselves, went straight to her heart. Besides, Paco need not speak to interest or move her; he had but to press her arm affectionately and at once she shared his feelings as they gazed at a canvas patinated by time or a landscape etched against the melancholy of the dusk. Sometimes, forgetting they stood before Madonna, Paco would murmur endearing words in her ear or kiss her furtively. Daily he seemed more deeply in love yet displayed no haste to make her his mistress; she felt infinitely grateful to him, disgusted as she was with the crude sensuality of men. But one day, as they came out of the Convent of San Isidro del Campo where they had been admiring some magnificent sculptures by Montañés and the tomb of the unhappy Doña Urraca de Osorio, burned alive by order of the Justiciar, Paco said:

“Puriya, it is harder for me to leave you every day. I want to send the fights I still have to the devil and stay with you always.” Then lowering his voice, which was warm and caressing as a breath, he added; “With you, darling . . . we two together . . . far away and alone, in the country, at La Barrancosa. . . Would you like that? I am having the place pre-

pared now for your coming. And before she found time to reply, he sang *pianissimo*:

*Come, love, come over the hill,
Live with the miller in the mill.*

"Will you come? Say yes. Tell me — when?"

"Very soon. I want it to happen as much as you do — don't think I don't — but . . ."

"Then there's a 'but'?"

"A 'but' which is a mere trifle to you, Paco. I don't know how to explain. But before I go away with you, before I become yours, entirely yours, belonging to you as I never belonged to any man in my life, I should like to wash my heart of a little stain, to be certain of myself, to know I could make you happy and be happy with you. If I did not love you so much, if I did not hope so much in our love, I would not hold such a thought." Then, fearing she had angered him, she pressed against him, "You don't doubt me, do you, Paco? Your engagements this year will be over soon; you will be free then. I shall too. Then we shall belong to each other. . ."

Paco bowed his head and kept silent. After a few moments, he asked:

"What is the little stain you spoke of, Puriya?"

"Memories — remembrance of the old days which

still prevents me from being what I would like to be."

In spite of her passionate love for Paco and her disgust for Pitoche, Pura realized that a flicker of the old love still dwelled in her; an obscure tenacious memory of the senses, a root not yet dead and unwilling to die. She detested the singer, yet a confused and morbid sentiment, where hatred, pity, repugnance, and a carnal attraction were mingled in capricious doses, attracted her towards him. In spite of her past sufferings, her flesh, if not her soul, had remained instinctively faithful to the man who ruined her. More than once as she lay in the arms of her lovers, she had been forced to acknowledge it to herself not without sorrow and shame. Of course she had never loved anyone so intensely and tenderly as Paco. The deep, even affection he inspired in her, altered her, rendering her capable of every tenderness; it effaced the past and purified it. But the obsession that gipsy belongs only to gipsy, persisted in spite of everything and tortured her, though only intermittently and with less violence than before. This, then, was the little stain which she wished to wash from her heart, the flattering "but" which she called a mere trifle.

"ALL right now, take a rest!" Cuenca said, laying his palette and brushes on a little stand. The dancer came down from the little platform and stood motionless before the canvas.

"It's gripping ! That Pura is more Pura than I am myself," she said, "although she is uglier, I like myself better that way; I seem more expressive. Everyone of these figures is more eloquent and living than its model. This is the first time I have seen an Andalusian scene that does not look like a chromo. Painters who do this sort of scene generally dip their brushes in water. You, Cuenca, dip yours in wine; now in sherry, now in Valdepeñas. White wine, red wine, but wine always. When you apply it lightly, it is gold and blood. When it is thick, the Spanish flag, eggs and tomatoes in a black frying-pan."

"You're so amusing," Cuenca laughed; "what you have just said is far more to the point than anything the critics have written about my painting. They blame me for daubing my canvases with shoeblack and vermilion as though blacks, yellows, and violets were not the whole of Spanish painting. They say my effects of light are cellar-lights, as though those of Velasquez, Zurbarán and El Greco were not precisely that. They say that my pictures lack depth, air, and perspective. Well, what of it ? The important thing is that my rascals live, not ephemerally, according to the formula of the day, but classically, eternally. And they show it, too. Look at those faces; those are not people, they are entities."

The very large canvas was called *Above*; its subject was a scene in the *Tronío*. Pura appeared on the

tablao, in the foreground in the final attitude of her dance. The other artists, almost as large as nature, and seated in a circle in their most characteristic attitudes, composed the background. A second picture, finished some time before, was the pendant and the antithesis of this. It was called *Below*. It represented the lower portion of the stage or the witches' bower; the mothers of the artists lay heaped on the sofa, their heads leaning loosely forward or thrown back, their mouths gaping, their bodies broken. These Andalusian scenes, with their dull tones and pathetic expression, lacked the allure of Fortuny's brilliant canvases or the colorful, racy quality of *El Solitario*; but they exerted an irresistible attraction as revelations of the anguish of living, the doleful, mysterious depths of the human creature. The enigma and the drama which each man bears in himself rumbled, here and there, like an underground torrent. Those fleeting expressions and sudden illuminations of the features that underline the primitive condition of man were present here. Like the *seguidillas*, the souls of these creatures floated upward from the floor of the sea, from the depths of the personality, were revealed for a moment on the surface of the countenance and sank back into the depths.

"My painting is *cante hondo*," Cuenca used to declare, "I paint *soleares* and *seguidillas*."

Covacha came in with a tureen of *gazpacho* and

set it down on the long narrow table with carved edges and iron key, that stood between two windows. Under both these was a wide soft divan, upholstered with violet damask and covered with cushions. All the painter earned (little enough God knows!) he spent on faiences, on old pieces of furniture which he bought cheap, on Alpujarres carpets and on artistic curiosities which cost more than he could afford and forced him into debt. Since his was an expert's eye and he never wearied of ferreting these out, he sometimes made rare finds of unusual objects, old cloths, sculptures spoiled by crude painting or clumsy retouching, which, when he had restored them, became highly valuable. Thus he had gradually managed to acquire a number of pieces and curiosities — Toledan cabinets with tarnished gold and cadaverous ivory; chests with worn carvings; severe-looking church stalls; fragments of retables; tapestries; chasubles which stood out curiously against the shell-inlaid walls and the great flagstones of the floor.

“Now let us eat this little national dish of *gazpacho* with all the delicacy and grace it deserves,” the painter said, as he laid a chequered tablecloth, some thick soup plates of gipsy making and two bottles of *manzanilla* on the table.

At this time of year, no beverage can match the virtues and excellence of this simple Andalusian broth. *Gazpacho* is a refreshment and a collation. Its repu-

tation goes back to biblical days; it was much appreciated, too, by the Greeks and the Romans. At Seville it has always been popular. What hungers has not the *gazpacho* allayed! Don Pedro washed it down with copious draughts of verjuice which was nothing other than the Moorish *hacaraz*.

"Let me taste that *gazpacho*! I am hungry as a hunter. . . But tell me, Cuenca, aren't we waiting for Paco? He said he would come yesterday."

"Paco will come through that door when I begin filling the plates," Cuenca replied, as he dipped the ladle into the tureen, "bullfighting teaches a man to be prompt. Romero, Paquiro, Redondo, one-eyed Domínguez, every matador who ever fought, had a reputation for punctuality. Paco will not prove the exception to the rule. He is coming . . . why, look, there he is!"

Indeed, the door opened and Paco entered with Tabardillo, who bore a package under his arm.

"I bring you, *Señora*," the antiquary-picador said as he opened it, "one of those wonders you can find only in a museum; something that is the last word in sculpture . . . and that you can buy for a few coppers."

"Take care, Puriya, he is making fun of you."

"Making fun of her, am I? Cuenca will tell you if I am. Now, Cuenca, prepare to be bowled over by

a Miura bull ! No, I mean it; I am about to inspire you with a deep emotion."

"Well, what is it, man ?"

"Nothing at all, a trifling little Virgin, a Virgin by Alonso Cano. Yes, gentlemen, I have the honor of telling you the truth; it is by Alonso Cano and surely as I come from Seville, it bears the trademark, the stamp, that unique touch of Cano's that is like the breeder's colors in the ribbons on the bull's neck — it tells where it comes from."

Throwing his hat on the ground to gain time, he untied the package carefully and laid a little Virgin in sculptured wood on the table.

"Look at that and tell me if it isn't a wonder ! Here is a singing Cano, a pure, genuine, unadulterated Cano. This little object is really a marvel of art, at once simple and exquisite, realistic and mystical."

"Look how she prays, poor little woman !" Pura said.

"Yes, she is praying and weeping," Cuenca added, "you cannot imagine a greater simplicity, grace, and emotion. This poor small Holy Virgin, humble and pure as an egg, must certainly be the younger sister of that Saint Francis in the Odier collection that I consider Cano's masterpiece. It is incredible that hands tainted with a blood no doubt innocent were able to execute works so serene and pure. Cano, like

Herrera the Elder, Valdés Leal, Ribera, and so many great artists of the same period, had a lively character and a swift hand, which did not prevent him from being the most mystical of Spanish sculptors. He killed his unfaithful wife without other form of trial. Moved by professional jealousy, with a sword-blow he almost dispatched the painter Llano y Valdez (who was no cripple, either) into the next world. He always emerged safe and sound from the numerous duels he fought because he was brave and knew how to wield a sword as well as he wielded his brush and chisel. He belonged to the proud race of *Conquistadores* and Adventurers, like Cortés and Alonso Contreras, who, from a simple scullion, rose to be Commander of Malta, Saint Theresa d'Avila and the nun Alférez, a young noblewoman who escaped from the convent where she was about to take the veil, put on soldier's uniform and, fighting in Spain and Italy, won fame for her bravery, her quarrels, her slayings, and excesses. Surrounded by ruffians and bandits, she kept her integrity and faith spotless; she was the inspiration of Pérez de Montalván's best comedy, of Calderón's amazing *Devotion of the Cross* and Moreto's admirable *San Franco de Sena*. Cano was a mystic and a bully. It is to him or to his pupil Pedro de Mena that we must attribute a very curious crucifix I have had occasion to admire at Écija — a superb Christ, with prodigious anatomy, standing out against a wooden cross, with

silver filigree tips, covered with yellowing parchment. Well, gentlemen, when you pulled the top of the crucifix, you drew out a dagger."

"Heavens! I can see it from here. The mere thought of it makes me tremble!" said Pura.

"Only a Spanish artist could conceive such an extravagance," Paco declared.

"It is just such extravagances that have made us great," Cuenca continued. Then removing the blue canvas smock he worked in, he added, "A crucifix and a dagger, that is a symbol of old Spain. Now we have lost such extravagances; that is why we have fallen so low."

"If we ever try any extravagances, we get such a drubbing as would raise goose-flesh on the Almighty Himself," said Tabardillo. "Have you read about the Havana disaster in today's *Liberal*? Admiral Cervera's whole squadron was sunk, like Montojo's at Cavite yesterday. What would the Catholic Kings say if they raised their heads?"

"They would lower them and do as that Holy Virgin — pray with all their heart!" Cuenca replied, his light eyes darkening. "But as far as we are concerned, in this age we must pray differently if we are to bear the calamities in store for us and react against them; not on our knees and in church, but standing at the foot of the anvil, of all the anvils. Work is the only prayer that can reach the feet of the Almighty. In

the meantime, let us eat our *gaspacho*; we must live."

They sat down silently, their heads bowed over the table. For several moments there was no sound save the scrape of spoons on the plates and occasionally a deep sigh. Suddenly the painter pointed to the great canvas of *Don Quixote and Sancho*, saying:

"When I painted that picture, I painted a symbol of Spanish heroism, unable to find its incarnation in any task and wandering afield, exhausted and sorely tried, across the plains of la Mancha. At the time, did not know whither the Knight of the Sorry Countenance was bound. Now I know. He was bound for the arena, where he could gather strength, while Sancho, who lagged behind, was drifting towards Cavite. It is not quixotism, it is the doctrine of Sancho Panza that has led us to lose Cuba, the last jewel in that splendid colonial crown the Catholic Kings bequeathed us. Perhaps it is a good thing. Reduced to our own resources, forced to cultivate our own garden, we may perhaps once again play the parts of men and prove ourselves worthy of the name. By the Saints, let us be Spaniards, Spaniards of our day and age! Let us concentrate our forces in the arena, which is our *gym-nasia* and *palestras*; then let us spread over the whole of Spain and throughout the world."

He tossed his head back and in the larmoyant tone and with the emphatic gestures of a trouper, continued, "Knight of the ideal, do not scorn the modern

adventure of work as too prosaic, for work bears in itself the substance of many ideals and is the truest servant of the great human hope towards which our ideals tend and where they fuse. But what road shall we follow? What methods shall we use? Each physician prescribes a different antidote. As for me, though I am only a simple mortal, I believe our greatest need is to know ourselves, to know what we are and what we claim to be, and then to find out how our instincts of domination and our vital dream, those great springs of intense life, agree or fail to agree with the noble hope of liberty, justice, and love. For this hope is the quintessence of man's vital dream; it makes him live humanely; it legitimizes his superior aspirations, triples his strength, and inspires him to struggle forever under the dome of heaven. How can we direct the ageless energies of our race into the channels of modern activity without diminishing these energies or bastardizing the race? How shall we become modern without ceasing to be traditional Spaniards?"

Cuenca paused. A long silence ensued. The painter was lost in the contemplation of the beams of the ceiling. Tabardillo coughed, filled out his chest, and casting a fierce glance at the company, said sententiously:

"There is a lot of poverty here!"

Then he spat a jet of saliva to one side.

"A lot of ignorance, too," Paco added.

"And a lot of pride," said Pura.

"Poverty, ignorance, and pride are terrible but not irremediable ills. If we really wished to do so, we could spirit them away. Work is a cure for poverty, education is a cure for ignorance, travel is a cure for pride. The difficulty consists in finding a spring-board, a stimulus to give us the divine desire to conquer the world and to project ourselves through time and into space."

Paco smiled:

"You forget, my dear old Rufus, that the mission of the Andalusian is not work but pleasure."

"Work is a pleasure when one goes about it gladly. Our so-called innate laziness, Paco, is simply a joke. We waste more energy dancing than others use to forge iron. Let us apply our energy to producing the material and spiritual things we need. But alas ! we believe in nothing, we make fun of everything, and that crude scepticism is killing us. At all costs we must create a new ideal for ourselves, a Dulcinea who is not Aldonza Lorenzo and who may lead us to commit with delight folly after fecund folly. But how shall we discover the formula of work that is pleasant ?"

"For my part, I have found it already," said Pura, half serious, half smiling. "When I dance, I do it with joy and as conscientiously as though I were saying mass or wished to reveal a great secret to the public."

"Bravo, Puriya," Paco said, taking her hand and kissing it. "The same sort of thing is happening to me now, too. I am looking for something more than cheers and money when I fight; I am trying to say something to people—I don't quite know what; I want to disclose some indefinable mystery to them. And it delights me."

"As for me, gentlemen," Tabarda declared somewhat sulkily, "I must confess I scarcely care for attacking bulls, lance in hand, or selling antiques. Still I must say, when I daub a faience that pleases me, when I take it out of the oven and find it baked as I wished, then I feel as great, as overwhelming a joy as the Virgin Mary Herself must have felt when She was delivered of the Christ."

"That is because you are neither a picador nor an antiquary but a potter," Cuenca answered, "what you love is the only thing you ever do really well. I say this: if every Spaniard worked to 'reveal his secret' and 'disclose his mystery' like you, Pura, when you dance and you, Paco, when you fight, and you, Tabardillo, when you make pottery, we would know ourselves a great deal better, we would show more true strength and we would have no difficulty in recovering our ancient vigor. Spain possesses great spiritual energies, but you see, those energies lie buried and idle in the womb of the earth. To strike veins, to sink wells, and to draw material out of them is what we need.

It is silly to hold the house of Austria responsible for our decadence or the Bourbons for our wretched Governments; it is silly to think the remedy for this evil can be found in a monarchy, a republic, or socialism. We have been paving the way to the loss of Cuba for centuries because not a single one of us was fulfilling his task in his own sphere. We have not been loyal to ourselves; fate has therefore been disloyal to us. By betraying our element, we have lost our sense of rich reality, we have ceased to hear the inspired voices of the native soil. Let us return to the tradition, not of form, as so many mummified spirits want us to do, but of substances; let us adopt the fashions imposed by the times, never changing in essence but distilling and purifying that essence from age to age. The desire to dig wells and to extract the appropriate material from them begins to appear. The manufacture of *azulejos* has known a new birth; so have the admirable art of wrought iron and the mozarabian art of cutting bricks as lovingly as stone. Painters are digging out El Greco and Valdés Leal; writers are resuscitating Góngora and Gracián; architects are beginning to discover the enigmatic Churriguera; all of them are beginning to feel in terms of Spain. And here is Pura, a matchless dancer, the Saint Theresa of the *tablao*, who, at this very moment, is about to reveal to us a facet of the soul of Andalusia in her interpretation of the *malagueña*."

The dancer had indeed promised to show them some of the dances she had created.

“Very well; here goes for the facet !” she answered laughing. “Come along, Paco, take your guitar and sing me El Chacón’s *malagueñas* in a low voice. We all know that the *malagueñas* are not dances. I shall interpret in dancing not what you hear but what you see when you listen to this *cante*. Imagine, gentlemen, a Sevillian patio with its fountain-basin, its little columns, its frieze of faience squares and its boxes of flowers. Inside the house, a man sings a *malagueña* with much manner and sentiment, as though weeping while he sang. You people here in the patio are seeing what the voice sings — Andalusian sorrow re-awakening and adorning itself so as to be beautiful. First, at the beginning of the verse, love, moaning and telling of passion and jealousy, of a hundred tortures, of little treacherous daggers stabbing the heart. Then a sob clutching the throat, tears racking the breast. All right, Paco, are you ready ? The accompaniment must be very slow, the *cante* very vibrant and deep. Between each stroke a pause. I shall put on my shawl and start. Now ! ready ?”

At each arpeggio, Pura took a step forward, stopped, turned her head to the right and to the left, gradually unveiling her face. With each note she stamped her heel and struck an attitude, and, stamp and pose blended without a solution of continuity, resolved

themselves into an expressive cadence. Cuenca and Tabardillo watched her with rapt attention. Paco strove his utmost to play as she wished. From the flowered shawl emerged first her face, then her nervous slim neck and at last her breast. It was like a rose, opening. Suddenly in an extremely swift turn she completely removed her dazzling shawl; her body, with its divine curves, appeared, now undulating voluptuously, now writhing fiercely as though possessed by the joys or sorrows of love. The movements of her hands and arms were as urgent as her flight, her posture, the swaying of her hips and the flutter of her feet as she translated into plastic terms the words of the verse. Her dance was unlike *sevillana*, *tango*, or *alegría* though it was made up of their steps and their most characteristic attitudes. It possessed less swing and grace but was far more insidious and expressive. What the classical dances only suggested was here realized.

Covacha and the stable-boy, attracted by the noise, had entered stealthily and of their own accord filled the glasses while they contemplated the dancer with delight. They understood she was improvising; they stared at her as people who were seeing a miracle enacted. Pura's features had become transfigured. She was no longer the charming, light girl, but the superb female, the haughty, terrible woman whose

smiles madden and whose glance kills. Her swooning, her fury, her contortions were those of a delirious pythoness. Cuenca watched her ecstatically; his very eyes touched the nebulous, bizarre soul of the *cante*; the *malagueña*, corporeal, danced before him. Paco, for his part, discerned only the beauty, poignancy, and ease of the dancer. "What secret, what mystery is Pura revealing to us?" the painter wondered, striving to analyze the strange emotions that surged through him. "That anguish, that prostration, that pride — do they belong to her or to the race? Is this pain that strives to delight us the pain of this woman here or is it the gallant, brave pain of Seville? Are these provoking attitudes and these gestures of resignation the woman's or the Andalusian people's? Are these haughty tears and that powerless will Pura's or those of Spanish pride? Can such passion, such fire, such violence of desire lead nowhere?"

Covacha and the stable-boy continued filling the glasses. The bottles empty, the "dead soldiers" were stood aside, one after another. Now and again they handed the dancer a *caña*. The latter without pausing in her dance drained it in one draught and passed it back without glancing at them. Paco did likewise when they served him, executing a series of high trills with his left hand, while he drank with his right. No one remembered Cavite or Santiago now. All of

them, masters and servants, thrilled with the joy of living and the Andalusian luxury of suffering. "Can such passion, such fire, such violence of desire lead nowhere?" the painter again asked himself.

Suddenly Pura turned deathly pale, brought her hands to her heart and, racked with sobs, fell on the divan. Paco pressing her against his heart and caressing her like a child, asked:

"Puriya, what is it? What is the matter?"

"Nothing, Paco, it's nervousness. It will pass. God, I am stifling! Give me a drink and don't ask me any questions."

Tabardillo passed her a full glass. They all looked affectionately at her. Pura drank thirstily, clinging to Paco; he could feel her heart thumping against his breast.

"Do you want to cry?"

"Yes. . . I do. . . I —"

"Cry then, Puriya, it will be a comfort. . ."

"How can she help but want to?" Tabardillo cried.

"I am a picador and that's what I am doing."

"So am I!" put in Cuenca.

"Christ, what a world of things she knows when she dances," Tabardillo continued. "When I said she was going to revolutionize the art of dancing, I knew I was right. Ah, *Señora*," he added, bending towards her, "if we had sent you to Cuba instead of cruisers, we would have won the war." .

"Don't make me laugh, Tabardillo, I have no desire to laugh," the dancer cried in hysterics.

"Covacha, open the windows and let some air in," Paco ordered.

"Let us leave her to rest here for a moment," Cuenca proposed, making a sign to Tabarda and to the servants to follow him as he left the studio.

Pura wore no corset. To Paco it was as though she lay naked in his arms. He felt the heat of her body, her soft flesh, the hard points of her breasts, yet his sensual emotions at no moment spoiled his great tenderness for her. "Strange," he mused, "for Pastora, a *jeune fille*, I now feel only a carnal desire while for this woman, the *gachí* of pleasure, I feel a pure love." Then, pressing his cheek against hers, he whispered in her ear:

"Puriya, you wanted me to love you utterly. Well, you have you wish!"

"Paco, don't tell me, don't tell me. . . It hurts."

"Hurts?"

"Yes, Paco, it hurts, because for you, I wish to be pure as the Holy Virgin and that is impossible. That was what I was thinking about while I was dancing, that and a thousand bitter thoughts. Ah! what suffering it is to be really in love."

"All that will vanish when we are both alone at Barrancosa."

"Yes, it will, won't it? I shall be yours, yours

alone ! Oh, if God would let me die by your side !
. . . Tell me, Paco, what I feel for you now is what
they call ideal love, is it not ? Ah, I would wish no
love in the world to be more ideal."

His only answer was to kiss her lips.

C H A P T E R N I N E

WHEN IN Seville, Paco never failed to visit the *Tronio* in the evening. After each tableau, la Trianera came down from the stage, crossed the hall amid cries of "*Olé!*" and "*Viva España,*" and sat down at his table with Cuenca, Míguez, and Tabardillo. When the programme was over, if Paco was out of town, his friends accompanied her home. She owned a charming little white house, filled with flowers; she had acquired it long before and renovated it; now she was completing the furnishing under the expert direction of the painter. The tiny patio was a pure gem. Twenty little pink brick columns with capitals sunken like marble, supported the upper galleries, covered and flanked with little balconies from which gay-colored Jerez mantles hung like tapestries. The *azulejos* at the plinth of these columns had been designed by the painter. A little fountain of Triana pottery, in the middle of a circle of small flowerpots, occupied the centre of the patio which was covered with round pebbles through which

ran small paths studded with bricks and slabs of stone. Between the columns, small designs, formed by four squares of enamel, were buried in the wall, or else simple plates, imitations of old Hispano-Arabian dishes, adorned the walls. Salient palm-trees in pots of unglazed terra-cotta, standing on iron bases, enlivened the corners of the patio; in the corridors, carpeted with Alpujarres, stood several pieces of Sevillian furniture of slight worth but highly decorative and a half dozen rocking chairs of painted wood with rush seats. Over the wall opposite the door, Cuenca had spread a Manilla shawl and on it a sort of trophy consisting of a guitar hung vertically between two tambourines on which scenes of the *tablao* were painted; above these a picador's beaver and, higher still, a cocked toque. The canvas protecting the patio from the sun was of heavy material with a wide, gay fringed border of crudely embroidered colored wools like a donkey's halter. The light, sifting through, fused these violent, diverse colors into a harmonious whole that proved not only picturesque but in perfect balance.

"It's really most colorful," Cuenca said, surveying his handwork with satisfaction.

When Pura left the café with Paco, they usually stopped at Mother Curra's to spend an hour or two making love and laying plans for the future. The clients of the *Tronío* knew about their affair; they

knew about Pitoche's tribulations, too, for the singer made no mystery of these. His songs grew more and more melancholy; he made constant allusions to the unhappy passion that had turned him into a gloomy, emaciated, livid creature. His *cante* had struck a lower, deeper, and more opaque note. Sometimes he seemed to be weeping rather than singing. "Ah, how that gipsy suffers! how wonderfully he sings these days!" said the good people who frequented the café to "hear a man suffer." Their elbows on the table, their eyes shining like crystal, their nostrils dilated in the luxury of vicarious suffering, they heard Pitoche tell the rosary of his lamentations and despair. The trills of the virtuoso, deep artificial throat-effects gave way to stifled moans, sometimes interrupted by a wail of agony. His voice was slightly winy, yet not without warm accents, notes deep and sonorous as a 'cello's, inflections superbly expressive. Against her will, Pura listened to him with a rueful joy and, as though aware of it, Pitoche seemed to sing for her alone. The black hollow eyes of the singer sought her out, fastened on her face, seemed to cry out his suffering to her.

Paco pretended to notice nothing; Pura looked away or sat down, turning her back to the singer. Pitoche always managed to meet her but tried in vain to speak to her; she invariably moved on without answering him. On the stage he encouraged her and applauded

her more than the others did, his eyes meanwhile imploring for the alms of a glance. But she pretended not to notice him. While she was dressing, she would hear him coughing in the green-room. As she arrived and left the café, she was always certain to find him at the door, waiting to bid her good night. This persecution offended her; far from mollifying her, it infuriated her. What really moved her was to see him so abject, so humble in his love, who was once so haughty and so harsh. One day as she entered the *Tronío* without her maid, Pitoche came up to her and with tears in his voice begged:

“Pureta, have pity upon me. Can’t you see your indifference is killing me?”

She was about to reply drily but the look of anguish in his eyes stopped her. Mastering herself, she said:

“What can I do about it, Pitoche? If you weren’t crying for the moon, this would not be happening to you.”

He bowed his head:

“I do not want you to love me since you love another man; all I ask of you is not to be so scornful and so cruel. I am desperate; I am losing my mind!”

“What am I to do?”

“Don’t shut the door in my face when I speak to you; be charitable enough to listen to me. Even a man condemned to death gets a little mercy! My only crime consists in loving you, yet you have con-

demned me, and I am dying, I am dying of sorrow."

"It is not sorrow that is killing you, Pitoche, but the dissipated life you lead."

"I drink to drown the love that gnaws my soul and will not let me sleep !" he said excitedly. Then bringing his face closer to hers, he continued:

"Pureta, Pureta, I love you, I love you more than my mother. Do you hear ? All I have tried to do to forget you, to pluck out the poisoned thorn here in my heart, has proved useless. My ills are incurable, I know I am lost and I drink, I drink. I am killing myself to keep from killing myself. If you knew what black thoughts storm my mind when I see you so much in love with him . . . and I forced to swallow it all patiently . . . and I raging ! Ah, if you loved me the least bit, I would say nothing; I would be a saint ! Oh, Pureta, love me, love me a little. Tell me you have not forgotten everything; tell me you still remember the good Pitoche, who used to wash you when you were ill, who stole sweetmeats for you !"

"Now you are back on the same old subject. If I listen to you, all I hear is distasteful."

"Let me tell you, at least once, what is in my heart, Pureta."

"I cannot and will not listen to you, Pitoche."

"It is for his sake you are acting like that, isn't it ?" the gipsy asked, clenching his teeth and narrowing his

eyes, which, from suppliant, now turned evil and menacing.

"For his sake, for my own, and because it is my pleasure. Isn't that enough for you?"

Taking the dancer's arm and pressing it violently, Pitoche, out of all patience, cried:

"Well then you shall listen to me whether you will or no!"

"And my answer is; you can go to the devil, you wretch!" she cried, pushing him back.

Pitoche raised his hand in anger as she eyed him defiantly; then, shrugging her shoulders, she moved off contemptuously.

A few days later, the singer sat as usual in the witches' bower while the dancer was dressing. Argüello approached him and said mysteriously:

"Do you know what is happening, Pitoche? I have found out the bird is about to fly the coop. To-night she dances for the last time; she is leaving for La Barrancosa with *Señorito* Paco. El Ñaño told me."

Pitoche made no answer. Argüello peered out at him a moment from his small dishonest eyes. Then Pitoche asked:

"But what can I do? Ah, God curse my fate!"

"Stop them!"

"Stop them? How?"

"Separate them. What is your knife for?"

"And by what right, idiot?"

"By the right Love gives to any man with guts. If a man has guts, God in Heaven Himself could not take away the wench he wants without paying for it. Don't play the simpleton. Every time I have fancied a *gachí*, I have used desperate measures. And I've got what I wanted, willy-nilly."

"There is nothing to be done with this wench," Pitoché objected disconsolately. "She is beyond our reach, Argüello."

"That wench is like any other. Let her feel her power and she'll tread on your toes and throw you out. But if you give her a couple of good smacks when she raises her head, she'll come back and eat out of your hand. After she's been warmed up a little, there's nobody on earth like my Pulida; she's soft as a glove. Women are all alike!" he finished sententiously.

"If you treat Pura roughly, she returns it with interest. Has it ever entered your mind to slap the Queen of Spain in the face? Well, it's exactly the same thing here. Pura is a queen in her way; she is used to great and small grovelling on their knees before her. She is powerful, beautiful, popular. A slap cannot reach her. Look how the *Señorito* Paco treats her. A man could not be more delicate; you'd swear by God he was her fiancé. And you can't say he isn't a man. Pura deserves every attention; everybody stands in awe of her as before a shrine. And you want

me to go and make a damned fool of myself when I'm the lowest creature in her universe ? Yes, that *would* be a clever thing to do !”

“So far as I can see you're afraid of both of them !” Argüello suggested insidiously.

Turning towards his companion and looking him straight in the eye, Pitoche scanned each word he uttered as he said:

“Don't make me laugh; my lips hurt ! I am not afraid of him or her or you, see ?”

Then changing his tone, he added: “My trouble, Argüello, is a thing you cannot understand because you are far too stupid. Forgive me for telling you so to your face.”

“On the contrary, I'm proud of it; I am too stupid to let women make a fool of me and men tread on my toes. What use is your head to you ? Just to let women lead you by the end of the nose and men steal your women.”

“We shall see what we shall see. I'd rather go to prison and hang than see her in another's arms.”

“Good for you, Pitoche. At last you are beginning to see what's what. That girl was yours once; she is yours by right of first possession. You would be no better than a timid, cowardly, weak-minded ass, if you loved her in earnest, and let a frivolous *señorito* steal her from you only to amuse himself for a moment and then send her packing ! What would Seville say

of you ? Even the street-urchins would laugh in your face. As for her, she would only despise you more. If, on the other hand, you make trouble, she will return to you, you may be sure of it. Perhaps that is what she is expecting from you ; show her your temper, be bold, insist on your love. There is not a *gachí* in the world, rich or poor, famous or not, who wouldn't lose her head over a man who stakes his all to win her. That is the plain unvarnished truth, truer than Gospel and don't forget it." Then moving back and laying his hand on the other's shoulder, he added, "Listen, Pitoche, if you need a friend, I am entirely at your disposal."

After the first number, as the artists came down from the stage and Pura went towards Paco's table, which was vacant, Pitoche joined her and implored in a low voice:

"Pureta, let me say two words to you. You have plenty of time before you go to him. Don't be cruel; have pity on me."

"Go away ! Go to the devil !" she answered.

It had been agreed that she and Paco would take supper together that evening and leave for the country at daybreak. But instead of feeling happy, Pura was nervous and worried.

"My heart tells me something is going to happen. Oh, I hope that brute does nothing stupid !" she kept repeating at every moment.

"Ah, Puriya, you cannot guess how I have longed for this moment !" Paco said, advancing with outstretched hands.

She sat down opposite him. Looking at him with a tender, mocking glance, she asked:

"Do you love me very much, Paco ?"

"More than I have ever loved anyone in the world. A nail driven into a board to the head could not be lodged more firmly than your name in my heart. Even when I face the bulls, I think of you. In the last fight, a Veragua went for me under the cape; he got me. I shot through the air like a rocket; I just had time to say: 'Farewell, Puriya !' "

"Oh, what a joke !"

"May a wild beast gore me to pieces if that is not the truth !" he said solemnly. "When I rush forward at a bull, I think of you. 'Forward, for my love's sake !' I say to myself. And full of ardor and confidence I carry off the pass as though you were standing behind me with the Virgin of La Soleá to save me in case of peril. Yes, I love you as I have never loved before. You see, Puriya, you are not only a woman to me but the incarnation of Woman, because in the adorable grace of your personality, in the perfection of your features, you combine the charms of all the others. You are, as Cuenca says, the paradigm of grace. When I watch you dancing, I do not see the most beautiful woman of Triana (which,

though superlative, is nothing so far as you are concerned) but I see Triana itself, in its Manilla shawl, its gipsy skirt. To give you an example of how I feel, let me tell you that since I have been sitting here talking to you, my wine has been quite tasteless because you were not drinking with me. And I like wine, God knows !”

“Will you always love me like that, Paco ? I warn you that I shall be very jealous; I shall not share you with any one; I want you for myself alone. And you always like to amuse yourself.”

“I did but I don’t now,” Paco corrected, “I have had various affairs; I have been rather dissipated especially since I took up bullfighting. It’s only natural; the profession itself forces you to it. When you risk your hide time after time, you feel an irresistible desire to forget danger, to make love, and to drink deep of all the joys life has to offer. Remember, Puriya, every bull that rushes forward into the arena bears a thousand deaths at the end of his horns. Then your temptations are so great ! As soon as you become famous, your admirers and friends bother you to go to all sorts of parties; the most proper ladies send you notes redolent of glory and young girls swoon if you toss them a flower. Women bore me now and dissipation disgusts me. I am happy only with you.”

They spoke of their plans for La Barrancosa. Paco

intended to introduce a great many improvements in his farm and to test the cows and calves again so as to keep only those that seemed worth raising. His stock was good; the bulls from his pastures did not belie their origin. But Paco found that his uncle's old stock was thickening as a type and losing in fierceness; to recapture its pristine splendor, there must be much careful selection and skilful crossing.

"The tests I mean to make will last all winter. Cuenca and Tabardillo will come with us; the lads of my quadrille will often run down too. You'll see what a good time we shall have. My country horses left for La Barrancosa yesterday, and so have the cases of *manzanilla*! We will ride early in the morning; we will gallop round the farm and see the cattle graze. We will teach you how to chase young bulls and to knock them over with a pike. Cuenca, Tabardillo, and Alegre are excellent pikemen. You will see me flag the heifers; we will work all day long and in the evening, by candle-light we will abandon ourselves to the *cante* and the dance."

During the second number, when El Ñaño had finished, Pitoche cried to the guitar players:

"My turn now."

Then, after a prelude of a few deep notes, he closed his eyes and began a *malagueña* with a special introduction.

Alone with my grief. . .

"*Olé!* Long live good singers!" a dancer cried.

"Long live art and talent!" El Ñañe added solemnly.

You are forsaking me. . .

Pitoche crooned the final note *pianissimo*, let it die out and took it up again after a silence, till it grew into a melopæa of anguish:

. . . and I remain

*Alone to suffer this consuming sorrow,
Seeking to drive you from my thoughts—in vain!
Seeking a remedy for my heart's pain
That shall not heal tomorrow and tomorrow,
That shall not ever heal again. . .*

He put such emotion into this last verse that the young woman sitting near him said anxiously:

"What is the matter with you today, Pitoche? Upon my word, your singing hurts me."

Pura heard him, little though she cared to. She felt a strange emotion that stirred up the mire of the past, giving it all the actuality of the present.

My eyes are filled with tears.

The *cantaor* continued to sob rather than to sing:

Each time I . . .

"Oh, how he is suffering, poor child !" the woman sitting next to him whispered.

Pitoche's effort brought the blood coursing to his face, dilated the veins at his temples. Each verse was but a plaint, a prolonged lamentation, now breaking into tortured sobs, now dying down to an endless moan:

*Each time I think of you,
My eyes are filled with tears,
I know not what to do
Nor how nor why I languish,
But my heart is filled with anguish,
My eyes are filled with tears !*

His voice broke, racked with sobs.

Outside, the rain came pouring down. The few clients in the café listened in rapture. In the middle of the third verse, Pitoche was seized with a fit of coughing and could not continue. Pura grew pale. Paco frowned.

"I believe that gipsy still has hopes of winning you. I think you. . ."

"Please don't think any such thing or I shall be offended, Paco," the dancer interrupted quickly, "you know I cannot abide him ! I would give anything in the world never to have laid eyes on him. I shall never be able to understand how I could have loved

him. But after all — I pity him when I see him suffering because of me.”

Pitoche sat down at the table and began to drink with Argüello. When Pura had finished dancing, she asked Paco to see her to her dressing-room.

“To your dressing-room ?” he asked.

“Yes, I am afraid that creature will come and annoy me with his tears and supplications. I shall get dressed, then we can go up and have supper.”

They went out together.

“You see, Pitoche ?” said Argüello, “it is just as I told you; the dove is flying off with her pigeon. Do you mean to tell me you are going to stand there with your arms crossed ? You’ll stand about as high as a blade of grass in her estimation, soon. Not to speak of others’. Nobody will want anything to do with you after that. You can’t do that, Pitoche. Come to your senses; think it over. Honor is honor: to defend it, you must go down into the arena.”

Pitoche made no answer; he continued to drink. His thin swarthy face looked even longer and swarthier than before. His velvety eyes seemed wider, his cheek-bones more salient and his ears, which seemed to have become unfastened from his skull, fell forward. The graceful dimple in his left cheek when he smiled had changed into a deep wrinkle. Argüello did not cease to exhort him with words and brandy. Suddenly Pitoche interrupted him:

"Stop it, Argüello. Leave me alone, I know what to do."

Argüello looked about him; the hall was deserted.

"Have you got a tool?" he asked, and as Pitoche shook his head, Argüello drew his knife furtively and slipped it into the other's hand. Then he wrapped his cape, with its embroidered hood, proudly about him and, having shaken Pitoche's hand heartily, made for the door. From there he looked at him a moment and whispering to himself: "The fuse is lit!" he went out.

Pitoche went up to the private rooms. Only one was occupied. He stood at the door and peered through the keyhole. Pura was seated on Paco's knees; they were kissing passionately, murmuring tender words and protestations of love. Pitoche felt a horrible griping inside him. He had to make violent efforts not to scream; he felt himself weakening. A rageful jealousy made him tremble in every limb. Then he drew himself up again, closed his eyes and leaned against the wall. For a long time he stood thus; then he looked again. Paco and Pura had risen to their feet; they were preparing to go out. When they opened the door, they found themselves face to face with the singer. He looked like a ghost.

"What do you want, friend?" Paco asked without the least surprise, as though he had expected this untimely apparition.

"I want you to listen to a little speech I have to make. Unless you step over my dead body, you won't leave here with that woman, you cur, you twopenny bullfighter !"

Pura pushed him aside and shaking her fist under his eyes:

"Who are you to stop me, you evil snipe ? I am free as air, am I not ? Have I not told you ever since I came to this café that I refused to have dealings of any sort with you ? Can't you see, you triple idiot, that you're putting your foot into it up to the hip ?"

"All right, Pura, all right, but you are not going out of here with that man !" the gipsy answered in a voice at once humble and threatening.

"Puriya, I beg you not to waste a word on this drunkard. Give me your arm and let us go," Paco said quietly. Then to the *cantaor*: "As for you, you damned fool, you will get out of here or I shall kick you out."

Then, as Pitoche did not budge, he took him by the shoulders and threw him against the wall like a bag of bones. Pitoche opened his knife and rushed at the bullfighter. A blow on the wrist from Paco's stick disarmed him.

Then, Paco's hands closed like a vice over his throat. Pitoche's face grew purple. His eyes bulged out of their sockets, his tongue hung out of his mouth like a piece of bloody meat between a cur's teeth. Pura

looked at him in terror. Yet at the same time a sudden pity seized her, a pity born in the remotest recesses of her heart. It surged through her soul. A choking sound escaped from Pitoche's throat:

"Pur . . . eta. . ." he managed to say.

The dancer realized that he was imploring her aid; immediately the old Pureta rose again in her. The deep-rooted love of the female for the ruffian who had seduced her burned through her veins like a consuming fire.

"Don't kill him, Paco. Don't kill him, bandit!" she cried wildly.

Paco continued pressing; Pitoche writhed desperately. Suddenly Paco's grip loosened, he uttered a muffled cry and fell on his back. The gipsy stared up at Pura without daring to believe his eyes; Pura looked like a tragic madwoman. She held the knife, red with blood, in her hand.

"What ? You, Pureta, you ?" he said, understanding at last.

"Oh my God, what have I done ?" la Trianera sobbed, as she tottered across the room.

Pitoche held her up. Together they walked down the little stairway, as a man buried in his black cape slunk into the private room where Paco lay lifeless.

C H A P T E R T E N

PURA AWOKE out of what seemed a hideous nightmare, panic-stricken, her throat parched, her heart like lead. She strained her eyes, tried to rally her thoughts. This low meanly-furnished room, with its flaked walls, was not her room. On a table of white pine wood, covered with an oilcloth of the same color, she saw a brandy-bottle and two tumblers; sprawling in a red-plush armchair, Pitoche lay sleeping, his mouth open, his forelock glued to his sweaty brow. Pura looked at him uncomprehendingly. Then, with a cry, she buried her head in her hands.

"What have I done ? My God, what have I done ?" she moaned, tearing at her hair.

Pitoche sprang from his chair and tried to calm her.

"Easy, easy, Pureta, don't be frightened ! There's nothing to be afraid of. No one knows. . . I am here, I will protect you. Courage, *niña* ! What's done is done ! We must live now." And he tried to kiss her.

She repulsed him violently.

"In the name of all that's holy, don't touch me !" she cried, with an aversion so profound, so obvious, that the singer stood petrified.

"Pureta," he said at last, "are things always going to be like last night ? Shall I always love you and you repel me ? You weren't afraid to do what you did for me, and now. . . Pureta, I don't understand."

"Neither do I. I don't understand myself. I don't know how it happened. What made me strike Paco ? I love him, I love him with all my heart. Why am I here with you ? I loathe you. O God, O God, is it true ?" Then, in a dead voice, "Everything's over now. No, no, no ! it's all a dream, I am mad, I am mad !"

Pitoche deliberated for a moment.

"You say you hate me, Pureta ?" he said at last. "Nonsense, nonsense ! You can say what you will, but I won't believe it ! I know you better. You have a heart of gold. You don't hate me. Or — yes, you hate me, you hate me, all right, but at bottom you're true to me. You love me. Your pride rebels, you're ashamed to admit it, but you can't wipe out what has been between us, Pureta. You'll never forget that I was your first lover, that I made a woman of you; if I've been bad to you, I've been good too. I'm in your blood and you're in mine, and all the rest is nothing."

The dancer did not hear. Searching the crannies

of her consciousness, darkened by a thousand conflicting feelings, she tried to recall what had happened. But she could not. Anguish and horror robbed her of all thought. All she could see was Paco falling, with outflung arms; all she could hear was his muffled groan as he fell. The rest was riddled with gaps, it slipped through her mind in confused pictures.

As they stole down the little staircase of the *Tronío*, hugging the walls, the steps seemed to groan under Pura's feet and a black gulf to yawn before her. Then like damned souls they began their desperate flight through the murkiest streets of Seville, as if they were running from their shadows. The night was black and stormy. Ever and again a lurid flash rent the sky, and the streets, the houses, the churches past which they fled loomed hallucinating and unreal, like monstrously animated shapes. Pura, making the sign of the Cross, stumbled aimlessly on, obsessed by sinister visions like those in the pictures of Valdéz Leal, Morales, and Ribera. The alleys looked like frightful caverns full of weird ascetics doing penance or writhing in agony; the buildings like moving and eloquent masses; the towers like Greco's gigantic and emaciated Capuchins or Zurbarán's livid monks.

"Where are we going?" Pitoche panted.

"Come on, come on," she answered.

On and ever on they fled through the town redolent with memories of the loves and crimes of King Pedro

the Cruel. In her terror, Pura remembered the legends with which Cuenca had filled her romantic head and she murmured, "Paco, my love, Paco, my dearest," like a recurring stab, a maddening, obsessing refrain. From the *Tronío* they passed to the Alameda de Hércules and thence to the Alcázar. They turned into the historic thoroughfare of Bustos Tavera, where the house of Doña Estrella still stands, that wondrous Doña Estrella whom King Sancho the Brave coveted and whose brother he had dispatched by the hand of her fiancé, when the brother, failing to recognize him, had flown to the defense of her honor. The fiancé, ignorant of the identity of his victim and of the nature of the injury he was charged to requite, swore to avenge his master and keep his secret. Bound by the terrible fidelity of a hidalgo, he kept faith. Yet he knew that he was killing his own happiness. Arrested, condemned to death, and well aware that his honesty would cost him his life, he would not betray his master.

Then they crossed the Calle de María Coronel, named for the woman who, pursued by King Pedro, deliberately dipped her face in boiling oil to destroy the beauty which was the innocent cause of her peril. To escape the persecution which still dogged her, she had herself buried in the depths of a well dug in the orchard of the convent, where she lived in retirement, and miraculously flowers grew over the well.

They entered the ancient Calle de Candilejo, where the royal desperado killed a man in a brawl. The wicket still stood where a little old lady with a taper had witnessed the bloody scene and denounced the murderer. They passed the Alcázar, and Pura suddenly remembered the ghastly drama of the Hall of Justice: the four forsworn judges caught red-handed, and beheaded on the spot, their heads nailed to the wall as an example of the implacable probity of the monarch. Then, amid other memories, she recalled the tale of Don Fadrique, hunted like a boar up and down the halls and corridors of the castle and butchered by halberd and dagger in the chamber of the Grand Master. They passed the Golden Tower, vibrant yet with the heroic lay of Peruvian ingots and the groans of so many prisoners, a building that was both dungeon and safety-vault. Hurriedly they pressed on, the spectre of Paco at the dancer's heels. The Paseo de Cristóbal Colón, with its trees whispering in the wind, the Arena, the Prison flashed before their eyes as though on a screen.

"Pureta, I can't, I'm done for !" moaned the singer.

"Come on, come on !" she repeated.

Rushing hither and thither, through dark, tortuous streets, they decided at last to enter a sordid tavern, driven by an insane desire to drink, to drown their memories and efface the past. Greedily they gulped

down a glass of wine; then another and yet another. From time to time, Pura sighed deeply, trembled and wept; the singer would whisper:

"Pureta, you are giving yourself away. Pretend ! Drink ! Brandy cures everything."

They drank. The strained face of the dancer was pale as wax; but her green eyes, heightened by terror and blurred with tears, shone with a strange flame in the dusk of the tavern. Two suspicious-looking characters came in, sat down and called for drinks. One wore a filthy, dented bowler hat, the other a black silk cap; neither wore a collar. They propped their elbows on the table and began to talk mysteriously. Pura thought them plain-clothes men, and Pitoche thieves, for the neighborhood was almost as ill famed as the Compass and the Court of the Oranges had been in olden times.

"Pureta, put away your jewels, veil your face and pretend you are listening to me. They'll steal the breath from your body here. Mind now, or we won't get out of it alive."

And he began to croon in her ear, verse after verse, Pura listening the while with sorrowful pleasure. The song which the gipsy poured like a narcotic into her ear dulled her pain far better than alcohol; it conjured away the present as by magic, and submerged her in a sort of torpor. When he paused, she said:

"Sing. . . Sing. . ."

And they sang, and they drank, and they found drunkenness, and finally in a room to which Pitoche dragged her, the fathomless abyss of sleep.

"You see, Fate wills it. We cannot escape. We are bound closer than ever now," Pitoche continued with ill-concealed satisfaction, "Tell me you love me a bit, just a mite, Pureta. Don't be bad, don't torture me. I can't stand it. You are killing me with scorn."

The rage she felt for herself rose again, flinging on his shoulders the unbearable burden of her ruin.

"I told you the truth: I hate you, I'll always hate you. I hate you !" she cried. Now she felt a great sense of relief, as if with those words she were avenging Paco and proving her loyalty to him.

"Blast my soul ! Why — why did you defend me then ? Why did you get drunk with me ? Why are we here ?" He moaned; his face twitched as though he wanted to cry.

"I don't know; don't ask me; for God's sake, stop ! Leave me alone, can't you ?" she cried, closing her eyes. "I'm sick. Fever. My hands are burning, my head is burning. Give me a drink."

He took her hand and changing his tone:

"Yes. You *are* feverish !" he said.

Hurriedly he brought her a glass of fresh water which he drew from the gourd suspended from the ceiling in a corner. Then, assuming that the fear of

discovery caused her excitement and anguish, he added:

"Easy, easy, Pureta. Nobody knows; they won't find us, they can't. If they do, I'll say I did it. Easy, easy!"

Pura opened her eyes, looked at him, and closed them again.

"All you think of is the police, all I think of is Paco. He may be dying at this very moment, he may be dead, and to think that it's I, I, who. . ." She plunged her head in the pillow sobbing, "Paco, my Paco . . . Paco, my dearest!"

Pitoche mastered an impulse to choke her. Then, unable, as he well knew, either to beat her or to endure the pain she caused him, he felt a sudden overwhelming sense of self-pity and a morbid faintness, which moved him to weep for her as she wept for another. Tears ran down his swarthy face, as big as beads — Pura saw them and was touched by them.

"Forgive me, Pitoche!"

"Love him, but don't tell me," sobbed the gipsy. "By God, girl, I love too and I suffer. God! God! Who would have thought I'd come to this, and all on account of you, Pureta? I don't know myself now, when I look in the mirror. I don't care for anything. I don't know why I go on living. I'm losing my voice, too. Why was I born? Cursed, cursed be the milk which fed me."

And rising, he began to beat his head on the wall.

Then he poured a glass of *Rute*, swallowed it eagerly and sat down again. Pura could find nothing to say. For a long moment they sat speechless, he gulping his tears and she staring at the ceiling.

"It might not be a bad idea to find out what's happening instead of sitting here and moping," Pitoche finally declared, completely recovered from his brain-storm. "I'll go to the café first and have a look around, as if nothing had happened, then I'll go to Argüello's lodgings. How's that? Bolt the door and don't open if anyone knocks."

He buttoned his clothes, brushed his hair in front of a broken mirror tacked to the wall, and left. Scarcely had his footsteps died away, when she jumped from the bed, tidied her dress (for she had slept in her clothes and shoes) and hurriedly did her hair. Then she wrapped herself in her black *crêpe de chine* shawl, and made for the door. But as she turned the knob, she shrank from going abroad alone and, returning, sank into the padded armchair.

"Fate wills it. We are bound closer than ever," she murmured, repeating his words. Insensible for a moment to her anguish, she wondered how far fate would hold her to her former lover. She had to admit that she needed him, that the burden of crime was more than she could bear alone, and she fell to calculating the infamy of her situation. For herself she felt profound disgust and for him a heightened hatred.

When he returned, she turned on him so wildly and harshly that she seemed to him a changed woman, a woman he had never known.

"What has happened?" she cried, leaping to her feet; and catching his complacent expression, she added her face alight with new hope, "He's alive? Speak, for God's sake, speak."

"Heaven is good to us, Pura, we are safe. No one suspects, everyone thinks Argüello did it. His knife was found in the room and what's more — cheer up, my darling! — the old devil will never tell. He was found this morning stone-cold of a bullet on the bridge of Triana."

Tossing his hat in the air, and cracking his fingers like castanets, he danced a step or two, crying with crapulous glee:

"Hurrah for the mother that hatched me! Saved, Pura, we are saved!"

"Who cares?" she cried furiously, "you beast! you swine! you know what I want to know. . . Is he alive? . . Answer."

Pitoche stopped and stared at her stupefied. Then his face clouded. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he answered hoarsely:

"Alive? Yes. But in a bad condition. Couldn't even speak." He mused: "If he died, if only he would die!"

Pura picked up her shawl.

"You're going ? Leaving me like this, dying, helpless ?"

Without a word or even so much as a glance, she went out. A carriage was passing. She took it and drove to Cuenca's studio. Covacha was pacing with bowed head in the stable-yard. He ran to her:

"You know what has happened ?"

"Yes, yes ! How is he ? Covacha, for the love of God, don't tell me he is —"

"We brought him here and he's been unconscious ever since. His condition is desperate. It's Fate, Fate, *señorita*, but what a trick to play on us ! Just when things were going so well, to trip us up like this — engagements pouring in, money raining on us ! Want to see the painter ? He'll tell you what the doctors say."

"Yes, Covacha. Tell him I am here." And she entered the studio, dimly lit by an oil lamp.

Her steps echoed as in a church. Though she was used to the darkness and severity of the place, it seemed more forbidding than ever at night. The shadows streamed down the walls like immense bands of crêpe. In the gloom, the portraits seemed instinct with an eerie life. The dancer sank into the wide divan where she had rested daily from the back-breaking postures to which Cuenca condemned her for hours at a stretch. This sofa, the seat of which was a soft little detachable mattress, served the painter as a

bed, by the simple process of laying sheets and blankets upon it, an office which Cuenca performed for himself. In the centre of the studio, completely finished and resting on two easels, stood the two canvasses: *Above* or *The Triumph of the Tablao* and *Below* or *The Witches' Bower*. Pura felt for the first time the full force of dramatic contrast in these two pictures, and she shuddered. "I too shall fall from on high and sink — who knows? — even lower." She stared at the canvases, with bated breath, her elbows propped on her knees, her face in her clenched hands. In that posture Cuenca found her. So deeply was she absorbed that she saw him only when he stood before her. A furtive glance assured her that he did not know the truth. From him she learned that Paco had one lung affected, that his condition was grave but that, short of a complication, the doctors hoped to save him.

"God grant it!" she moaned, "I would give my life for it. And to think. . . Oh, what a terrible tragedy! What torture, what anxiety! Cuenca, if you knew, if you only knew what I feel at this moment. I wonder I am still alive."

He sat down beside her and took her hand.

"Be calm, Pura. You must have faith. Paco will live, I feel it, the fever is abating a little. As for Argüello, he has paid his crime. He is dead as he deserved to die, with lead in his brain. It's only a pity

that Brageli, poor fellow, will go to jail for it—but it won't be for long; he killed him in fair fight and with Argüello's own gun. Besides, it's perfectly plain that robbery was the motive. Paco's watch and wallet were found in the scoundrel's pocket. It's as clear as day. The only thing I don't understand is what Paco was doing alone at the *Tronío*. When did you leave him?"

Pura made an effort to reply but could not. Cuenca noticed her deathly pallor and thinking that she was about to faint brought her a brimming glass of *manzanilla*.

"Weakness . . . it's weakness," murmured the dancer, "I haven't eaten all day."

"Drink, it will pick you up. I'll go and see if the consultation is over. I'll send you something to eat. Then I'll come back and tell you what they say."

"For the love of God, hurry!" she cried.

When Cuenca came back, he found her asleep on the sofa. Her pale drawn face revealed her mortal fatigue. Her mouth was clenched like that of a child about to cry. Her closed eyes were like two large lazy violets.

The painter looked at her for a moment. Then, taking his country blanket, he spread it over her with jealous solicitude and left the studio.

C H A P T E R E L E V E N

CUENCA went upstairs. In the dining-room the bullfighters of the quadrille were gathered with several friends; Señor Míguez, his son Pepe and various notables — the Bishop, the Captain-General and the Governor — were in the drawing-room. Rosarito and Pastora were watching at Paco's bedside. Early that morning while she was still in bed, Pastora had heard the news from Pepe, to whom the painter had written to tell him what had happened. The young girl had exclaimed, clutched at her heart, and fainted. When she came to, she leaped out of bed and dressed hurriedly, indifferent to the presence of her brother.

"I don't know if you should do this," Míguez said to her on the way to Paco's house.

"Pepe, I know what I should do."

"Father will be furious."

"Give him his drops ! I can't help that. My fiancé's dying and I'm going to nurse him. As long as he is in danger, I'll stay with him night and day.

Father wouldn't let me speak to him, but he couldn't prevent my loving him. I loved him, I love him still. Come on, all the rest is rubbish !”

“Pastora, don't be silly. In the first place, you are not Paco's fiancée but the Count of Peñablanca's. In the second place, you are not free, you can't do just as you please.”

“Listen to me, Paco has always been my fiancé as far as I am concerned. The Count, why, I never could stand him. Father knew that, and if there is any scandal, he has only himself to blame. And you're wrong, Pepe, about my not being free. I am twenty-three years of age and I propose to give my heart as I please.”

“Very well, very well, little sister, only don't get me into trouble !” said Pepe, who was frankly selfish where his peace was concerned. “Don't let Father know that I had anything to do with this truancy, for that's what it is — truancy, legally punishable truancy, disregard of paternal authority, flight from the paternal roof and all the rest — which is far worse.”

“Truth first !” she retorted. “Take me to Paco's and then go home and tell Father everything.”

“Right, right. — Anything else ?”

“Pepe dear, do something for me. I've often done things for you. Rosarito will love you for it.”

“Well, maybe I will,” said Miguez, struck by this final argument. “If Rosarito and you both think that what you're doing is the right thing to do, I suppose

it can't be wrong. You know more about these monkeyshines than I do. If you weren't my sister, I'd say you were acting very handsomely, and most likely I'd be saying, '*Olé !* Here's to young girls who know how to love !' "

"Well, pray God to save Paco, or you won't have a sister; I'll take the veil."

"Eh ? What's that ?"

"That's that ! It's all. I should have stuck to him in spite of everything."

As they entered the little street leading to Paco's house, Pastora's heart stood still. The street was strewn with straw. A large crowd had gathered under the balconies. A long line of praying women were passing before the door which was guarded by Covacha and Gazpacho. Brother and sister paused, terror-stricken.

"My God ! What is it ?" Pastora cried, more dead than alive.

"We are waiting the Lord's will, you see. The *Señorito* is the same. Go up, go up !" answered Covacha.

Pastora was on the point of fainting. She caught her brother's arm to keep from falling; her head swam, her heart beat violently. The gentlemen standing about the gate, in the patio, or on the stairway, parted deferentially to allow her to pass, many removing their hats as though to honor her coming. All knew

the thwarted romance of Paco and Pastora, and they appreciated, as it deserved, the young girl's conduct.

"Her face was colorless — did you notice ?" one exclaimed, "I felt like saying, 'Here's to women who suffer like that, here's to women who suffer with all their heart !' Gentlemen, the Virgin of Carmel has just gone in that door and Death might as well take to its heels !"

"God hear you !" sighed another.

"Certainly, my friend. With a woman like that to nurse him, no Christian would dream of dying. I was very worried, as you all know, for it is more than affection I feel for Paco, it is a genuine passion. Well, now I feel easy. Something tells me he will pull through."

Covacha and Gazpacho had all they could do to hold back the crowd which thronged around the door and tried to push in. They admitted only those they knew. By afternoon, the street was closed to vehicles, and even on foot it was hard to force one's way to the house. Word of the gravity of Paco's condition had travelled fast and all Seville came to the place where the popular idol, the hero of great and small, lay fighting death. Their faces showed genuine grief. The very urchins stood grave and stiff. Some old women, their eyes ecstatically raised to the balconies, were telling their beads. In churches and private chapels, candles were burning for Paco's recovery.

When Rosarito saw Pastora, she put her arms about her:

"How I thank you for coming, Pastora," she said, "though I am not surprised."

"How is Paco?"

"Still unconscious. He lost a great deal of blood. Come in and see him. It is too bad he won't know you or be able to thank you for your visit."

"I have not come for a visit, Rosarito, I have come to nurse him with you."

"How good you are, Pastora," murmured Rosarito, kissing her again.

They entered the bedroom which was feebly illumined by a little oil lamp. In the faint light, the livid and drawn face of Paco had an ivory hue. Pastora approached him, trembling, fell on her knees by the bed, and there, holding his hand in her own and gazing at him like a *Mater Dolorosa*, wept silently. Rosarito knelt on the other side of the bed, and neither moved until the arrival of the nurse. The latter came in with medicaments which she placed on a Salaman-can bureau upon which stood two porcelain basins, several vials, some gauze, and a few rolls of cotton. As they raised his head to give him a potion, Paco opened his eyes and recognizing Rosarito and Pastora, murmured:

"Poor girls! Don't worry."

After consulting Cuenca and Tabarda and gather-

ing a detailed account of the affair, Míguez went home to deliver Pastora's message to their father, the cattle-breeder. His study was on the ground floor. It was there that the young man went, sure that he would find his father reading the papers or sorting his files. The room was a vast one with two windows opening out on to the street; it looked like a museum of the bullfighter's art. Its walls were studded with a dozen imposing bull's heads. The names of these animals renowned in the annals of the sport for their ferocity or for some special characteristic lent an added lustre to the trademark and tradition of Don Antonio's stud-farm, one of the oldest in Andalusia. Among these noble beasts was the famous Jailer, a black bull, with long tapering horns, who had gutted eleven horses and wounded two matadors. To the right of this historic head hung that of a wild beast which had survived nineteen lancements and caused the death of illustrious *banderilleros*; on his left that of the last bull felled by the great Domínguez. Then came, at equal intervals and on the same level, other sinister skulls — that of the wine-brown bull which had given Frascuelo a frightful jab, and that of the monster which, after it had been lanced and riddled with *banderillas*, obeyed the voice of the bull-herd and let him stroke its head. From the ears of some of these alarming trophies hung the *banderillas* de luxe with which they had been decorated; from the bulging throats of others, the

knots of embroidered ribbon they had worn. Countless portraits of bullfighters, paintings, and photographs of country scenes covered the white walls. An ebony frame enshrined, like relics, the hilts of certain famous swords, among others those of Gordito, Bocanegra, and Chicorro. Under this frame, sheathed in its scabbard and hung horizontally, the sword which El Tato sent as a souvenir to Lagartijo on his retirement, caught the curious eye. Old mahogany and rosewood furniture, belonging originally to the founders of that family of rural nobility, garnished the room. A writing desk heaped with bullfighting papers and periodicals, *La Lidia*, *El Toreo*, *Sol y Sombra* and other publications of lesser importance, occupied the space between the two windows. On the wall between them had been placed, like an armorial blazon or panoply, the pikes, Moorish saddles, mantles, marvelously embroidered leggings, spurs, and equestrian portraits or portraits in country costume of the two last owners of the ranch — the grandfather and father of Don Antonio, for whom he entertained a kind of proud veneration. They were a pair of fine upstanding men with stern eyes, hatchet-shaped whiskers, and the look of brigands. On the opposite wall was a smaller and half-faded photograph of the Canon of the Cathedral, Don Diego Hidalgo Barquero, breeder of that herd of wild heifers which had been, with

two other cows from the ranches of Vincente-José Vázquez and of the Count of Vistahermosa, the foundation of the rich stock which the Míguez bequeathed from sire to son and which was the pride, almost the blazon of the family. The present proprietor preferred this tryst to any other. It was here that he negotiated his affairs, received his intimates and spent his time consulting the registers of his stock and the records of the bulls of his stud-farm.

As Pepe came in, his face betraying his agitation, the good gentleman peered at him over his glasses and asked:

"Hello, Pepe. What's the matter? Anything wrong?"

"Nothing much. Paco was knifed yesterday — he's in a desperate condition. Argüello, the singer, did it, to rob him."

The breeder sat up, pounded the table, and tossing his cigar away cried:

"Curse it! It's not true. What? Paco wounded? Paco in a desperate — ? . . . Are you sure?"

"I've just come from his house."

"Good God! Good God! it's a catastrophe. If Paco dies, it's the end of everything, it's the death of bullfighting. Quick! Have the horses harnessed. The horses — hey! — you hear? We are on very bad terms, my boy, but what does that matter now?"

Am I right ? Am I right ? Make haste . . . and don't tell Pastora. She'd be upset, she's be capable of doing I don't know what !"

"Now for it !" thought Pepe, and he added, aloud:

"She's done it. She heard it this morning; she asked me to take her to Paco's and she sends you word that as long as he is in danger she means to stay by his bedside."

"What ?"

"Night and day."

The breeder opened his mouth; he was about to launch something enormous, but, changing his mind, he thrust his hands in his pockets and walked from one end of the room to the other, under the ominous eyes of his bulls. Pepe's eyes followed him as he awaited the bursting of the bomb. After a minute or two, without raising his head, Don Antonio snapped:

"Tell them to harness."

Pepe grew more and more uneasy. His father, he concluded, had decided to go to Paco's, kick up a row, and bring Pastora home. When he returned, he found him seated, smoking an enormous cigar. "So much philosophy augurs no good," he reflected after a moment's observation.

"What do you say to it ?" he ventured to ask.

Out of a cloud of smoke the breeder replied:

"Pastora did well. I should have done the same thing in her place. But we must kill gossip and so

I am going to Paco's to support the child by my presence."

Pepe saw the heavens open. Unable to contain his joy, he said:

"Father, don't mind me — I must tell you — that's really sporting of you !"

"No, I am in the tradition, that is all," Míguez replied, "I cannot forget on this occasion that your mother, who was a saint, was obliged to do much the same in order to marry me. My future father-in-law, who was, I might add, an idiot, could not stand the sight of me, because he had had a duel with my father, as the result of some fool discussion as to the superiority of his bulls or ours. My poor Mercedes escaped from home, took refuge in a convent, cut her hair and sent it to the good man with these words: 'I do not wish to marry against your will, but since I shall never be able to forget the man I love nor love any other, I have decided to take the veil if, so long as my novitiate lasts, you do not change your mind. I am the flesh, you the knife; you have but to slice where you will.' Naturally our man did not cut. I did not want my daughter to marry an ordinary bull-fighter when I could give her a prince. But the bull-fighter has become a peerless swordsman, a sovereign artist, the born representative of something very great which is ours alone. Pastora still loves him and when a girl is like that, when she makes up her mind, Pepe,

there is nothing to do but let her have her way. Besides you love Rosarito, for which I don't blame you, and I am tired of playing ogre. The part is not becoming. Furthermore, I have always liked Paco, though I did hold against him what he said to me at the *Tronío* and I could not help thinking he wanted to discredit my stock. But I hear on good authority that he has done his best by my bulls in the Plazas for which I thank him with all my heart. And then . . . I have given him some cause to complain of me, I don't deny it. You know, my boy, that when it comes to being disagreeable, nobody can teach me much, but that in nobility, too, I yield to none. . . When they know how to hook me under the left breast."

"I always hoped that you would take this stand. It is worthy of you," declared Pepe, "and now what will you tell the Count of Peñablanca?"

Don Antonio scratched his head:

"I shall give him to understand that he failed to win her heart, and I can't help that. It was out of the question, Pepe. The grandees of Spain went to my head, I am afraid. I might have known that a pure-bred Sevillian like Pastora, daughter and descendant of breeders, a girl who can round up young bulls on horseback and dance the *alegrías*, the *sevillanas* and the *targos* with delicate grace, could love none but a lad of her race and background. The Count would have been little better than an intruder

in our family. We need a lad of our own like Paco or another."

"I'd be happy if it were Paco."

"So should I now. And Paco it shall be. From their earliest years Pastora and he always thought themselves engaged. You love him like a brother and I like a father."

A footman appeared, to announce that the carriage was at the door.

"Meanwhile, we must pray God to spare him," concluded Don Antonio, as he took his hat and his cane, "and to cure him quickly, for the sake of his engagements next season. He has contracts for a mere trifle of eighty bullfights: twenty in Madrid, five at Seville for the Feria, every blessed one at San Sebastián and Bilbao — and I don't know what all ! Besides which, he is to kill six bulls single-handed, at two thousand dollars apiece, two of them mine (one at Madrid, the other here) and he can do much for our brand. I shudder to think what would happen if this accident ended fatally. But God will not permit it; God cannot permit such a catastrophe."

As he drove to Paco's house, the breeder reflected that the bullfighter was, from many points of view, the son-in-law for him. Not that he was obeying a cold calculation, yet he could not but take into account the advantages which would accrue to him with the entrance of Paco into his family. The problems of

Pepe's and Pastora's marriages would both be settled. It would mean the apotheosis of his stock, for Paco and Pepe in partnership would boost it to the top. The boycott of the matadors against his bulls would cease because this new swordsman who "felled more flesh in Spain than anyone" would know how to utilize them and the others, to keep up with him, would have to do likewise. In a word, the Heavens had opened for him.

As he stepped from his carriage, the breeder said to his son:

"Go to San Lorenzo and ask Father Simón to celebrate a singing mass for Paco's recovery every day and to keep ten big tapers burning night and day."

"I'll add ten more for myself and Pastora," thought Pepe as he set off.

And that is how Señor Míguez found himself at Paco's, occupied in chatting amicably with the Bishop, the Captain-General and the Governor.

CHAPTER TWELVE

AS LONG as Paco's condition remained critical, Pura stayed at the studio. She would come early in the morning; she would stand at the door like a pale haggard ghost of herself, too deeply moved to speak. Cuenca did his best to console her, but she would sink on the divan, ask for the latest details and put a thousand questions to which he replied as solicitously as though she had been a sick child. When she heard that Pastora was in the house, nursing the patient with Rosarito, she turned deathly pale; her lips quivered and heavy tears rolled slowly down her cheeks. Sitting beside her, he said:

"Don't go to pieces, don't despair! Paco will pull through. Paco loves you with all his heart . . . he loves you. . ."

"Not now; he doesn't love me now and he won't ever love me again. If you knew, if you only knew. . ." she moaned.

Cuenca was puzzled. He associated her cry of "never again" with Paco's fierce delirious cry of "the

slut, the slut !” “What has happened ?” he wondered, but could find no answer. The hopeless distress of the dancer alarmed him; he did his utmost to console her and change her thoughts. But it was all in vain. She seemed to hang on his lips, but she heard nothing; she ruminated her own thoughts. When she seemed most attentive, she would interrupt him and send him for news of Paco. On his return he would find her in tears or staring fixedly at the ceiling or kneeling with arms crossed before an antique Virgin, set on an ebony desk inlaid with mother-of-pearl and ivory. Of this little desk she made an altar, decorating it with flowers and flaming candles. At home she did the same with a chest on which stood the little Virgin of Cano, “lowly and pure as an egg.” In the evening, she spent hours in fervent appeal to her. Prayer relieved her heart; it was a refuge against the pangs of remorse. When she soliloquized before the little statue, she suffered less.

At such times as she was neither at the studio nor at home, she went to San Jacinto. Candles burned night and day on the altar of the Virgin of Hope. The face of the Divine *Señora*, illumined by the ghostly light of the tall candles, fascinated the dancer and threw her into prolonged ecstasies, out of which the guardian of the church had to rouse her, when the time came for closing. Her devotion was as unthinking as her unbelief had been. But as her only hope

lay in God's mercy, she surrendered completely. Masses, candles, prayers, pledges, nothing proved good enough to implore the Blessed Virgin for Paco's recovery. As he improved, as the horror of having assassinated the one man she loved above all else in the world ceased to torment her, her despair turned to resignation and profound melancholy, the melancholy of a soul that has renounced all hope of happiness and expects nothing but suffering from life. Paco, she knew, would not betray her; yet it was not man's justice she dreaded, but Paco's sentence. The dread of his condemnation, against which there would be no appeal, maddened her. To win his pardon, she would have gladly embraced martyrdom. She was obsessed by the idea of washing her guilt in tears. And as water gushes from the rock when the pick strikes it, so a sudden longing surged from the depths of her heart to suffer for his sake, to sacrifice everything for him, even her immense love, to make him happy and to redeem her crime. Through a chink in her conscience shone a thin ray of mystical light that illumined the past and shed a new meaning on all its details. Pictures, images, sumptuous altar-pieces and the marvellous sculptures she contemplated every day in church spoke to her of suffering, expiation, and sacrifice. Cuenca was frequently struck by the force of her opinions; they were those of a penitent. Seeing her sick morally and physically, he said to her:

"Pura, something strange is happening to you; you are undergoing a terrible ordeal."

"I have a great weight on my heart, Cuenca."

"So I see. I can also see that Paco's improvement is not bringing you much comfort. Something else is bothering you; I don't know what, but I'm sure it's unreasonable. When a person is as much in love as you, your fault cannot be a serious one and you must have committed it unconsciously. I am sure if you did wrong, you are exaggerating its importance. Your self-torture makes me suspect that you were indirectly responsible for what happened; but after what Paco said. . ."

"Did Paco say anything?" she cried, in great agitation.

"Yes, last night. He said what we all thought when we heard of Argüello's attempt: that he was alone when he was struck and that he did not know the name of his aggressor."

"He lied," Pura murmured, hiding her face in her hands.

The painter paused in embarrassment. Then recovering himself and irritably repelling the suspicions that assailed him, he implored her:

"In the name of the Blessed Host, Pureta, tell me what you know. Trust me. I am your friend, I will help you out of this hell. You cannot bear this cross alone — for you *are* bearing a cross, Pureta!"

"Ah, Cuenca, if you knew — if you knew how heavy it is !"

"Tell me the truth ! I feel sure I can help you. Tell me the truth."

"What's the use ? I would lose the only friend left to me. You would drive me out of the house, and you would be quite right."

"You are guilty of a great crime ?"

"A hideous crime."

"Deliberate or involuntary ?"

"Ah, Cuenca, I don't know, I don't know !"

"I don't understand, Pura. You are good, honest, loyal. You love Paco and him alone. You could not have hurt him knowingly."

"But I did. It was I who struck him . . . struck him treacherously . . . though I loved him more than my life."

Cuenca stared at her aghast. He dared not believe his ears. He dismissed her confession as a fiction born of her unbalanced brain.

"Do you know what you are saying ?" he said at last. "*You* did it — you ? But how ? Why ?"

"Sometimes I wonder if I am not mad; but I'm not, I'm not, I suffer too much. No one on earth can conceive the hell I have been through since that night. Why did I do it ? I don't know myself, I'll never know. That's what is killing me. I would have taken my life long ago, but that's no punishment. I

want to be punished; I want Paco to avenge himself as he chooses. I want him to strike me, to beat me, I'll bear his blows and cry, 'I love you, I love you, I always loved you and I love you still!' That's the only thing that keeps me alive."

She had risen to her feet; her whole body shook.

"Paco, Paco," she sobbed, "if only you could read my heart, if only I could explain. . . But how can I? how can I?"

Sobbing violently, she paused. Cuenca closed his eyes, meditating. Then he passed his hand several times over his forehead.

"Pura, tell me everything — in detail — everything. What you have done seems abominable, but there may be some explanation for it. I will help you to find it; to know the truth may bring you some consolation. Something tells me that there are extenuating circumstances. There have been cases where a generous sentiment, a noble impulse of passion has led to crime."

"A noble impulse of passion led to crime?" she repeated as though a light had suddenly dawned on her. "Yes, that is possible, isn't it? Ah, Cuenca, you are helping me already."

The painter continued:

"Your great tenderness for Paco, your suffering, the tears in those eyes, yesterday so dazzling and today so tragic, everything speaks to me in your favor. No,

Pura, you have nothing to fear from me. I am sure to absolve you. I don't believe you capable of infamy; and even if I did, I would not hound you from my house. Human grief means too much to me. I shall not refuse you my help in this bitter trial; I shall bear your cross with you."

The windows were dark; the studio was lit only by the pale glow of the candles on the improvised altar. Gulping her tears and in a dead even voice like a faraway litany, Pura told the painter, step by step, how it happened, and the anguish, the remorse, the misery that had ensued. Cuenca listened, silent and grave as a confessor.

"Ever since that terrible night I have been dying, living in despair," the dancer concluded, "and to make it all more atrocious, Pitoche pursues me with his desire and reminds me that we are 'chained to each other.' I close the door on him, and he mounts guard under my window all day. When I go out, he follows me. Sometimes he stops me in the street and says, 'I am the one who is dying and you have killed me.' In the middle of the night, he stands out in the street half-drunk, and sings. I don't know whether he is singing or crying, but I know that it is driving me mad. The thought of causing any more harm than I have fills me with horror; I want to be charitable. Poor fellow! He doesn't know what has come over him any more than I do. We are all driven to and

fro, and none of us knows where we are going. But I can't! When I think that he was the cause—I loathe him, I hate him with my whole soul. And he keeps on pleading, pleading, poisoning my life! He writes me every day to plead or to threaten. Ah, Cuenca, you don't know what my life is now."

The painter listened, leaning against the wall and closing his eyes. There was a long pause. Finally Pura put a question.

"And Paco? Has he never asked for me? Not once?"

The painter shook his head. Tears streamed down her face, tracing slow furrows and falling on her skirt, one by one.

Cuenca took her hand and stroked it:

"It is terrible, Pura," he said, "but we must not despair. There is no crime which may not be expiated, and you have suffered so much! When our friend is well enough, I shall tell him; I shall explain the whole thing. And I am sure he will understand and forgive."

On her return, Pura found Pitoche at her door. Before she could open it and enter, he called out imploringly:

"By the health of *Señorito* Paco, I beg you, let me speak to you, let me see you every day, even for only a moment. Have pity, Pureta. I am spitting blood. I am dying. What are you afraid of? A dying

man ? What are you afraid of ? A wounded bull beaten to its knees ?”

To rid herself of him once and for all she deigned to reply:

“I am not afraid of you, Pitoche, but I suffer when I see you. I don’t want to see you. I can never forget that I committed a horrible crime and that I am living in despair because of you. You have been, you still are, my evil genius. What pity can I feel for you, when you have done such harm ? Be off now and leave me alone.”

“I did not know what I was doing, Pureta; passion blinded me. I am not claiming you. I know that your heart, your whole heart, is his and that for me, who love you so much, you have not even a crumb. Be patient with me. I don’t believe now what I believed when I saw you brandish the knife. I was sure that you loved me; that the feeling you had for me once had revived. But it was not that, it was something else, I don’t know what. I have lost all hope, but I love you still and that stifled love is eating my life away. Look at me, Pureta ! Look at the little trails of pain on my cheeks. Pureta, Pureta, do not let me die of despair.”

“You are killing yourself. What can I do ?”

“Grant me one last consolation; let me close my eyes looking at you. Look at me as you would at a sick cur. A little pity is all I ask. Remember, my

only crime is that I love you, like a fool, I grant you. But who can command love ? Pity me. What Christ felt, dragging His cross, is a bundle of straw compared with what I suffer, Pureta. My martyrdom has lasted eight months and I have lost my very manhood. I weep like a woman, I am dying of jealousy and I pray God to save the *Señorito* Paco; the joy that would bring you might make you less cruel to me, not for my sake but for his. I hate him, yet I would kiss his feet, if he would pardon and love you again, though the sight killed me ! And because you love him, though he were dead and I living, I would gladly take his place. I have sunk so low that, when I see you go to the painter's (of whom I am jealous too !) I am relieved to remember that, thanks to the *señorito* of whom I am even more jealous, you will not belong to him. Ah, Pureta, I am utterly mad and past curing. Now that you no longer come to the café, I don't know where I am or what I am doing. When I sing though, I close my eyes and see you as you are; and that is why I sing until I have no voice left. After that — liquor and gloom. Cursed be the day I was born ! No one ever suffered as I suffer. Soon I won't have strength enough to live, I live only to weep now, I cannot eat, I cannot sleep. If I'm still alive, it's because I live on my tears. I repeat, Pureta, this is the end, and my only hope is that death will soon snatch me from this hell; I'd welcome the other hell.

Pity me or kill me, once and for all. If you buried a little knife in my soul, I would thank you and say, 'Praise be to gipsy charity.' "

A fit of deep dry coughing shook him from head to foot. The dancer, in pity, said:

"Come in, Pitoche, and sit in one of these armchairs. I'll bring you a little water."

Before she could stop him, the singer fell on his knees and kissed her feet.

THEREAFTER, Pitoche appeared at the dancer's every day at nightfall, accompanied by El Ñañe, with whom he had grown very intimate. Pura received them at first in the patio, but later invited them into the little sitting-room, which was more sheltered and where the singer coughed less. An ancient brazier studded with many nails glowed in the centre of the room. The two artists spent their time stoking it, while Pura busied herself about the house or dressed in the adjoining room, her bedroom. Sometimes Pitoche took up the guitar and sang under his breath. All that he could not utter he declaimed in song, modulating his grief, his agony, his incurable loss. The dancer, with her mind on Paco, listened to him gloomily. She was suffering, she knew, the same pangs, the same hopeless affliction, and she felt the same utter exhaustion of all her vital powers. Then she would kneel at the feet of the little Virgin of Cano, or, throwing herself

on her bed, would bite the pillow to stifle her sobs.

Tabardillo usually came to these meetings, to offer the dancer antiques, jewels, and knick-knacks which he had been commissioned to sell for his bankrupt friends of the aristocracy. The meetings grew livelier. The picador was very gay and thoroughly familiar with the Andalusian dance. At his request, now that Paco was obviously improving, Pitoche would play for El Ñaño, to allow him to show off his dances, which he rehearsed with Pura. The latter would explain and even join the dancer, without however giving these scenes a festive character. Thus occupied, for a moment she forgot her sorrows. El Ñaño and Pitoche would leave at seven o'clock; Tabardillo remained for dinner, at which Cuenca joined them, at eight. Pura had asked the painter to keep her company occasionally in the evening, for it was then that she felt most lonely and despondent. Cuenca did so with pleasure. His affection for Pura was very warm. The dancer's expressions and sallies filled him with delight and her sorrows with a strange feeling of admiration, interest, and friendship. He found her perpetually rousing his joy and curiosity. Involuntarily, he would analyze, as a man and an artist, the mental characteristics, ideas and sentiments of that curious nature. In body and soul he found her the most perplexing and attractive creature in the world. He was constantly discovering new depths in her, new asperities and delicacies which

were the very essence of Andalusian feeling. Pura was much attached to him and enjoyed preparing his favorite dishes. The conversation usually dwelled upon Paco, though sometimes they spoke of singing and dancing, painting and bulls. When Tabardillo was not present, the dancer would speak of her sorrows and would ask repeatedly whether Paco had not remembered her. His reply, invariably negative, brought tears to her eyes:

"Paco will never forgive, he cannot forgive, he loathes me!" she moaned over and over. "He thinks I played him false and scorned him. But it's not true, Cuenca, it's not true! I swear it! I loved him as I have never loved anyone. My greatest ambition was to live with him. I was so proud and so happy in his affection, and yet I struck him to save the life of a man I abhorred, a man who had done me nothing but harm. Why? Why? Isn't it enough to drive one insane? Doesn't it look like some terrible curse?" And, clenching her fists, she would beat her head. Invariably the painter would reply:

"I believe you; I consider you innocent, and I have proved it. Do not despair, Pura!"

He could say nothing more, for Paco's attitude left little hope of a reconciliation.

"If you care for my friendship, never mention her again — the slut!" Paco had said when one day Cuenca had tried to speak of Pura.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

FROM THE confines of death Paco returned, gloomy and disillusioned. Neither the solicitude of Rosarito and Pastora, nor the painter's pleasant chatter, nor the wit of Míguez and Tabardillo could dispel his sullen silence. He barely spoke, and for long moments at a time he would stare at the ceiling, his brows knit, his jaws clenched, his face set and hard. Pura's "guttersnipe heart", as he called it, made life intolerable to him; it was a thorn, a penitential shirt, mortifying his flesh unremittingly. Gradually, as he began to recover, bitterness turned to disgust. Vanity, pride, and his self-respect as a man, no less than jealousy, exasperated the cruel anguish of baffled love. The thought that, as he lay there suffering, Pura was taking her pleasure in the arms of Pittoche drove him wild with rage and humiliation. The idolized youth could not reconcile himself to the idea that he had been tricked like a green boy, and he swore to be cruelly revenged as soon as he was on his feet again. Until he had washed in blood the insult

he wore, as he thought, on his brow, he felt incapable of facing his fellows or of meeting the bulls with his old proud assurance. "That guttersnipe and her lover shall pay and pay dearly," he swore to himself. The painful longing to know how far he had been betrayed and the gnawing need of explaining her treachery also tormented him continually. But when he rehearsed his relations with the dancer, he could discover nothing to confirm such ignominy. Fond memories of pleasant days filled his heart and clutched at his throat. And if Pastora and Rosarito were sitting, as usual, by his bed, wooing him with their chatter, he put out his arms and without a word, with a kind of exquisite inner refreshment, pressed them for a long moment against his heart. Often he would fall asleep in this attitude; they would sit silent and motionless, not to waken him.

One morning, as she was bringing him his chocolate, Pastora found Paco more taciturn than usual.

"Paquiyo, Paquiyo," she said to him, "you are unhappy about something. What is it? Why won't you tell me? Don't you trust me? Or Rosarito either? You should be happy, now that you are gradually recovering your health, but you are sad. What is it? It hurts me to see that my company gives you no pleasure. Don't you love me any longer? Do you feel that I am not making you as happy as you thought and as I had hoped?"

"Don't be silly, child," he said, "or I'll give you a kiss, not on the brow, not on the cheek, but full on the mouth, *niña*, on that little mouth made for a saint's everlasting damnation."

"Thanks, Paquiyo, but that'll do ! Tell me the truth; why are you so sad ? Father will let me marry you now. He does not expect you to cut off your pig-tail; on the contrary, he says it would be a crime. I have proved that I'd live on dry bread and water for your sake. What more do you want ? We have pledged our hearts, I am your fiancée; but if marriage frightens you and you like this better, why, we'll be married without ring or book. If you think, as you said one day, that I am too high-born for your profession, I'll leave my family and become a dancer. I have lost all that pride which hurt you so much; I have no will of my own now, only yours. Listen, Paquiyo, I love you so much, I'd gladly ruin myself for your sake. All I ask is your love, all I want is to be yours. Nothing else matters. May I count on you, Paco ? Ah, something tells me your heart is not mine alone."

"Yes, Pastora, you can count on my love. Adventures there have been, and women now and then in my life, but I have always loved you. I must tell you, though, that I *have* loved another woman. No use denying it ! But it was a very different love — a sort of very fond friendship, rather. The love I feel for you is a holy, full-grown love, 'bearded love' as they

say. And the proof of it is that the other one — all the other ones — could never prevent me from thinking of you as part of myself. Sooner or later, I knew we would belong to each other.”

“What beasts men are ! — Tell me, Paco, about that woman and your ‘very fond friendship’ for her. Do you still love her ?”

“I hate her.”

“That’s not so good. Indifference would be better. You know what they say — ‘From love to hate, a swing of the gate.’ I heard you were crazy about a dancer and she about you. Is that the one ?”

“That is the one.”

“And . . . ?”

“It was her gipsy blood, I suppose, for to defend her seducer whom she hated, so she said, she loved me so much that she stabbed me in the heart, Pastora.”

Paco stared open-mouthed at Pastora as he heard her comment:

“She loved you too much. . . I suppose. . . We don’t love very consistently here in Andalusia. Forgive her and forget her, Paquiyo.”

When Paco began to walk about, Pastora left the house for the night; but she returned with Míguez in the morning to keep her fiancé company all day, as he was often a prey to despondency. When they found Cuenca and Tabardillo there, it was not long before the clacking of castanets, the twanging of guitars, and

the clapping of hands resounded through the house. Míguez danced the *sevillana* with either Rosarito or Pastora. The latter would sometimes don a trailing, furbelowed *basquine* and graceful Cordoban hat and, cigarette in mouth, would mime the *bulerías* with as much spirit as the most experienced dancer. Her poses, her undulations, the tap of her heel, though always classic and thoroughly graphic, had a certain indefinable delicacy and distinction denied to the *tablaó*. Cuenca and Tabardillo looked at each other in amazement, as if to say: where can the daughter of the illustrious rancher have learned such consummate art and gipsy grace? Paco, watching her in dull bewilderment, involuntarily compared her to Pura, and by no means to her disadvantage; quite the contrary, indeed. Her matchless beauty triumphed at last, especially when she employed the full charm of her eyes, her mouth, and her body, as if she meant to efface from Paco's mind all memory of her rival.

"You are extraordinary, Pastora," he told her one day, with a fire in his eye and a look which amazed the young girl.

"Could I earn my living on the stage, do you think?" she laughed, her breast heaving with excitement, "well, Paquiyo, if you won't love me, I'll dance at the *Tronío*. Don't laugh; I mean it. I made a vow to the Virgin of our parish. Rosarito will tell you, she was with me.

Ask her. A vow to the Virgin: if she saved you, and you didn't love me, the *tablao*; if she let you die, the convent."

Paco's friends came to see him late in the day. The drawing-room, the dining-room, the corridors and even the patio were crowded with people of all ranks of society, who considered it their duty to call on the new matador. The dining-room table was always set with sherry and *manzanilla*, olives, ham, sweetmeats, and other delicacies at the disposal of visitors. Happy groups of laughing and chatting people formed on every hand. In the wide patio the heads of bulls slain by Paco attracted the eye of the fervent; connoisseurs exchanged opinions loudly and enthusiastically. Everyone knew everyone else and addressed his neighbor familiarly, hailing acquaintances with the characteristic cordiality of the Andalusian. The familiarity of the mighty and the sincerity and good humor of the lowly effaced all distinctions of caste.

Even the wealthy Señor Míguez was addressed by his Christian name only and greeted with a "Good day, Don Antonio" accompanied by a tap on the shoulder, as welcome as it was familiar and respectful. The breeder spent several hours there every day, receiving proudly each afternoon the congratulations of his friends on the engagements of Paco and Pastora, Pepe and Rosarito, already officially announced and favor-

ably commented on in all quarters, since they promised to constitute one of the principal attractions of the forthcoming season.

"The prettiest girls of Andalusia to bless the proudest lads of Spain ! You will have to give a tremendous party, Don Antonio !" they would say to him. And the good man beamed with pleasure and pride. He felt that he was at last on solid ground, that these marriages were written in Heaven and that they answered a common desire, a well-nigh national aspiration. The admiration, respect, and affection which his future son-in-law inspired; the proofs of high esteem which small and great manifested towards him; his notoriety, comparable to that of a sovereign; his glory, which eclipsed that of the most renowned names in Spain; the privileges, unique in the world, which he enjoyed; all these flattered the breeder as deeply as though he were the subject of them, and led him to view the condition he had once exacted as the price of Pastora's hand — the renunciation by Paco of his profession — as little short of national disloyalty.

"Deuce take it ! What was I thinking of ?" he reflected. "How could I fail to appreciate such qualities ? How could I—I, a breeder of wild stock—fail to recognize what his talent, his courage, and his person would mean to this country ? All the marquises, counts, and dukes put together weigh less and mean less than a matador of his class. Go to the peo-

ple, if you doubt it, and ask them. The lad will have a neat little pile in a few years, too! Besides, he's the most Andalusian thing in all Andalusia; the incarnation of all that we most admire. He is the flower of his race, as Cuenca says. Yes, Pastora is marrying the master of all Spain."

It was not surprising that such ideas pleased the breeder so much that he took a greater interest in Paco's affairs than anyone. Every day he discussed at length with the matador the engagements he had signed or was about to sign, or the stock, the breeding, the pasturage and what must be done with it. When he went to the country, he travelled over to La Barrancosa and brought home to the matador the latest news of his property. Obviously, Don Antonio was a typical representative of that rural aristocracy, all-powerful in Seville, which gave character and local color to the economic and social life of the Andalusian capital. Nothing so flattered the breeder as to have people say that his stud-farm was the "oldest and best stocked" in all Spain, or to hear the ferocity of his bulls vaunted or his exploits as a rider recalled. He adored the country for the profit he derived from it but mainly for the many opportunities for riding country life offered him: the "testing," the piking, and the selection of stock, tasks in which, despite his age and their hazards, he still played a prominent part. The cool of morning in the country pricked his nostrils and tickled his heart.

He grasped his pike as the Cid must have seized his sword; he led his farm-hands as El Campeador must have led out his army. Four or five times a week, he would put on his heavy coat and wide-brimmed hat and climb into his work-cart — an old tilbury drawn by two nags harnessed Andalusian fashion but without hoops or garlands — and, cigar in mouth, bowing right and left, he would sally forth to visit his pastures on the outskirts of the town. Sometimes he made the trip in the morning on horseback; and at nightfall the strollers about Las Delicias would see a band of horsemen clad in the elegant and picturesque accoutrements of the pikesman galloping home from the country.

“How well they ride ! How smartly they sit in the saddle !” they would exclaim, waving their hands at them.

“It might not be a bad idea to run out to La Barrancosa, as soon as you can,” said the breeder one day to Paco, meeting him in the stables, “you would pick up more quickly, and you might begin to ‘test’ your heifers which are good, not to say excellent, and to train for the Feria. If you like, we will all go, including Pastora. What do you say ? We’ll go to my farm, first, you can help me ‘test’ my cattle, and from there we’ll move on to yours, which is only a stone’s throw away.”

“Agreed ! We’ll leave tomorrow, if you like.”

"If I like ? Can I count on the lads of your quadrille ?"

"Of course."

The breeder went off to give the necessary orders. After caressing his horses and giving them sugar — something he had not been able to do since his accident — Paco went into Cuenca's studio. The painter had gone out. The two canvases, *Above* and *Below*, newly varnished and propped on their easels, stood in the middle of the echoing studio. As his eye fell on the portrait of the dancer, Paco felt a violent shock. His eyes swam, his legs shook, he grew pale; a fierce expression passed over his face.

"The slut, the slut !" he muttered, sinking on the divan where Pura had so often sat. In the dusk and stillness of the room, the brutal realism of the pictures struck his eye, his brain. He sat absorbed for an hour, two maybe, quizzing, probing, plumbing with hard eyes the dancer's expression, the drama and the mystery of her soul. "Why did she trick me ? Why ?" he muttered, grinding his teeth.

Suddenly the door opened and Pura entered. She did not see Paco and went straight to the inlaid desk which she had transformed into an altar, changed the candles which were going out, and placed some fresh flowers in the vases. Then she kneeled and prayed, her eyes ecstatically raised to the Virgin, her face radiant as a lamp, her arms extended like a cross. A thou-

sand tumultuous sentiments assailed Paco. He could scarcely believe his eyes. He wondered if he were not a prey to hallucination. Suddenly the gnaw of jealousy rose again in his soul, the irritated pride of the male gained the upper hand, and seizing the open jack-knife which the painter had left on the table after cutting his bread for breakfast, he rose. Pura turned suddenly, uttered a cry and, with open arms, ran toward him:

"Paco, Paco my dearest !"

The young man repulsed her violently. Livid with rage, he cried:

"Pura, you bitch ! When I lay between life and death, I swore to slash your face."

She closed her eyes and waited, unquailing, the avenging blow. Paco, seeing her so, paused with upraised arm:

"Strike, lash my face," said the dancer, "kill me, if you like, you have the right to; but don't doubt my love, don't believe I was unfaithful even though appearances are against me. I have always loved you, I love you still, Paco, my love !"

Paco took her by the shoulders and shaking her roughly:

"Liar ! Slut, filthy slut !" he roared. "I don't believe you. You tricked me, you cheated me, you struck me treacherously, like a thief, in the back. You loved your gipsy, your man !"

Falling on her knees and sobbing convulsively, she protested:

"No, no, no ! I hated him, I hate him. I never thought of betraying you, with him or with anyone. He has never touched me, not even with his little finger. All Seville knows that. My only desire, my greatest hope is you ! You, my love !"

"Then why did you strike me, why did you strike me treacherously ? Why did you run away with him and leave me lying there, half-dead ? Was that your love ? Gipsy ! Slut ! I ought to brand your face for everyone to know what you are. I ought to spit in your face and kick you out of my house."

"Strike me, kill me !" she cried, clasping his legs. "I expect it, I want it. I stayed in Seville for you to punish me. I am ready to suffer. Beat me ! At every blow I'll tell you, 'I love you, I love you' and all the tortures, all the fires of hell cannot make me deny it; it is the truth, Paco, the truth, though it sounds like a lie. That is what is driving me mad ! . . . How can I make you understand ? I don't understand myself. How can I explain ? It can't be explained," she added in utter discouragement. "But I swear to you, by the blood of my mother, I never tricked you, I have not been untrue to you. When I realized you were going to kill, and kill on my account, I don't know what happened; I lost my head. I was no longer the Pura who loved you, who loved you with

all her heart; I became the old Pura again, I suppose. I don't know, I don't know. I have prayed so hard to the Virgin to save you and to enlighten me, but She could not explain it either. Ever since that cursed night I have died a hundred deaths for you every day. Ask Cuenca; he knows what I have been through. If you knew, you would forgive me. Forgive me, Paco, forgive me or kill me ! I cannot, I will not live, unless you forgive me."

The words of the dancer rang so true that Paco could not but believe her. The anguish of that face, haggard with grief, the despair of those eyes, swollen with tears, moved him profoundly. Compassion overcame him. He recalled her kisses and caresses. He saw her as he had just seen her praying for him, kneeling to the Virgin, and the spring of love, so long obstructed, bubbled anew.

"Puriya !" he cried.

"Paco, my beloved !" she replied rising. In an impulse of passion, a bestial fury, they embraced; their kisses clasped and clung like animals biting, their tears ran like brooks, their sobbing broke, roared. . .

LATER, seated on his knees, fondling him, she said:

"Oh, Paco, I breathe again; I live now. What joy ! You forgive me, you love me ! I shall leave Seville blessing your name."

“Leave Seville ?”

“Yes, Paco, when I have fulfilled my vow to the Virgin in Holy Week. I vowed to disappear, to sacrifice my love to your happiness, if She saved you. Do not grieve, Paco mine, believe me, it is best. I am a hindrance, I know, a menace to all of you.”

Then, in a broken voice, making a superhuman effort to control her tears, she added:

“I cannot be your wife, I cannot make you as happy as Pastora, she loves you, and she is guiltless. Happy Pastora ! I must, Paco, I must, for your sake, for your sister’s sake, for my own sake; this is the greatest sacrifice I can make and the only one that allows me to live without remorse and to consider myself without loathing. The only sacrifice that will assure for me forever your friendship, your love, a disinterested love, a love of pure affection, such as I want.”

Realizing sadly that she was right, Paco made no attempt to dissuade her. All he said was:

“Poor little Puriya, what will become of you ? How can I be happy, if you are unhappy ?”

“I shall be happy in my own way. It will be enough to know you love me and remember me. I have done you so much harm, let me do you a little good. My greatest consolation will be to know you are happy, to think I have a part in your happiness. Don’t forget me, Paco, write often. Tell me all you are doing.

Tell me if you are not happy; I shall fly to you from the ends of the earth. And now, hold me close to your heart, Paco, for the last time."

Once more they embraced, weeping, infinitely sad, infinitely gentle.

Covacha announced lunch. Pura left. Paco stood spell-bound in the middle of the room. A few minutes later, Cuenca came in. He had met the dancer at the door.

"You were right to forgive her, Paco," he said, laying his hand on his shoulder, "I give you my word, she deserves your respect and affection. You will never know what she suffered for your sake."

And, in a few words, he related Pura's confession and the agony he had witnessed. As they talked, they walked up and down, arm in arm. Suddenly Paco stopped and looked at his friend, gently but firmly.

"Look here, Rufus, old fellow, tell me the truth. You love her, don't you?"

Cuenca reflected. He had never asked himself that question; he had never dared to. He closed his eyes and replied:

"Yes, Paco, I love her. I have loved her without realizing it, without hoping for anything from her."

"And Pura?"

"Pura loves you!" the painter said, rueful yet honest.

For a moment Paco read the face of his friend, read the sorrow of a man who had never been loved; then, shaking his head, he murmured:

“Poor Puriya ! Poor old Rufus !”

Locking arms as if to console one another, they left the studio. They climbed the stairs and entered the dining-room, where they found, seated and gaily chatting, Pastora, Rosarito and Míguez, a trinity of bright smiles, a triangle of flashing eyes, black and moist as ink stains.

“You look as if you had been out on a spree, Cuenca !” cried Rosarito. “When will you really learn to behave ?”

“On Doomsday,” the painter parried, with a laugh. Then catching a loving glance passing between the fiancés, he poured himself a glass of wine quickly and drained it to the dregs.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THREE WEEKS after his arrival at Don Antonio's farm, Paco began to take part in the rural labors on horseback, and to "flag" the heifers which were being tested. He worked very calmly, without taxing himself. Salero, El Tamplaíto and three other peons, summoned for the purpose, stampeded the heifers; Alegre and Tabardillo attacked them with the lance; Paco and Pepe directed the mock-killing. When a heifer showed great fight, Paco took the stick and *muleta*, charged straight at her, and downed her with a few passes so neatly aimed that the winded animal remained riveted to the soil. Then, with his cigar still in his mouth, he simulated the supreme blow several times, now a thrust *á recibir*, now *á volapié*, with perfect precision, lying down literally on its neck to hit with his open hand the place where that hypothetical thrust had stuck. He skirmished without bravado or affectation; his attitudes were sober, instinctively sculptural. The heifers never struck him; but as he braved them, they grazed

him, leaving their long hairs on his tight fitting trousers. Though he was playing with practically harmless animals, his art was stirring in its peculiar knack of meeting their horns, of keeping always on their own ground, of clinging to them, so to speak, and manœuvering them quite gently into the folds of his cape or his *muleta*. His companions who were incapable of working a bull without spreading their legs wide apart or, as the gazeteers said, opening the compasses, looked at each other and smiled. But Pastora and Rosarito did not smile; they were sick with fear.

"No stunts, Paco! We are dying with fear, you know," his sister called out from the stand erected on the little green, where the breeder and his overseer gravely jotted down notes, while the girls applauded the bullfighters, prepared tea and passed around glasses of wine. From time to time, Paco and Pepe climbed up on the railing and rested, chatting with their fiancées. Work was over by sundown (twilight being dangerous for the animals in their overheated condition) and the girls helped the men into their smart coats and knotted silken scarves about their throats. Then, clinging to their arms, tender and affectionate as two young wives, they accompanied them home. Of the two, Pastora was the more attentive; and quite simply, quite naturally, without the least suggestion of coquetry. She was as loving and submissive now

as she had once been proud. Paco realized that in saying, "I have no will of my own now, only yours, and I would gladly ruin myself for your sake," she had spoken the truth. Such absolute submission touched him and increased his love a hundredfold, despite his lively and constant recollection of Pura. Sometimes his heart would leap up as her name darted like an arrow through his thoughts. At night, alone in his room, he pictured her while he undressed, and his brow clouded.

"Poor Puriya! . . . It was not to be! . . ." he exclaimed, as he put out the light.

IN THIS field-work, whether on foot or on horseback, Don Antonio's guests found a rousing and agreeable pastime. They would start for the country in the early morning, preceded by the bulls, to round up and bring in, to the sound of tinkling bells, the animals to be tried out during the day. Don Antonio, Tabardillo and Alegre walked ahead, their *garrochas* on their shoulders; the lovers followed them, in fond conclave, in couples. Pastora and Rosarito wore riding habits, short coats and Cordoban hats; Paco and Pepe sumptuous country costumes. Presently the sun rose over a hill-top, tempering the air, gilding the meadows and laying broad blobs of light on the olive-groves and houses in the distance, which stood out as though chiselled on the horizon. The peace of the fields and the

cool of the morning gladdened the heart. The damp grasses gave off a suave, pungent scent; the chirruping birds wheeled and darted through the air. A hare suddenly sprang from under the horses' hooves. The young people, with their greyhounds, gave chase. Don Antonio and the picadors paused for comment.

"Odds they lose ! Odds they win ! There's a hare that can run ! Canelo has caught him ! Missed him, no ! Look, Negra almost. . . One more bound and — good for you, Rosarito ! Did you see how she switched him ? The girl can ride ! There; now, the dogs. There ! . . . Got him !"

The croak of the captured creature could be distinctly heard; and, shortly after, the riders rode back at a gallop, holding up the panting hare like a trophy.

Once or twice a week, Cuenca came out to the farm. He enlivened their mealtime, the long evenings and country sports with his nimble wit. He was an excellent pikesman but in the ring he clung to cover. He would throw his cape when the bull had passed, and, swathing himself in it artistically, return to his corner, to the derisive delight of his audience. Paco and he talked of Pura for hours at a time. After her last interview with the bullfighter, she had seemed resigned, though sad. She studied her dances as usual, she still burned her tapers to the little Virgin of Cano. Finally, she accepted an engagement in a theatre in Madrid and left to "stifle her sorrows in dancing."

The press was unanimous in praise of the originality and charm of her art; with the dancer of Triana, the essence of gipsydom and Andalusian art passed from *tablao* to stage to inaugurate a new, singularly appealing genre. In her letters to Cuenca, Pura spoke only of her theatrical successes and of Paco. "Do not tell him," she wrote, "that I am unhappy. It would grieve him and I do so want him to be happy ! But beg him to love me always; it is my only consolation. I shall be back in Seville at the beginning of March; after that, I shall drift through the world, dancing and weeping. I shall never, never forget him. I had never known, Cuenca, the pangs of pure love. But I would not change this devouring grief for all the pleasures of the world. To suffer for the man you love is a happiness which nothing can match."

THE "testing" of the heifers concluded, they began that of the steers, in open country. Some fellow-members of La Garrocha came out to join them; the house was filled with people. An extraordinary animation reigned at the farm from morning to night; voices and laughter in the corridors, outside the trample of horses on the round flagstones of the courtyard. Riders in fancy gaiters, with large wide-fringed cloaks tied to the pommels of their Moorish saddles, came and went at a constant gallop on mounts more daring than their masters. Each figure was an etching,

each group a picture. The work was sport, except for that of the picadors, who caught some stiff blows as they attacked the young unbroken steers. The galloping pikemen stampeded the young bulls from the herd, knocked them down at full speed by jabbing them skilfully with their pikes at the base of the tail, and held them thus for Alegre and Tabardillo, who tested their hides with a thrust or two of the lance. According to the endurance they displayed, they were declared fit for the ring or relegated to the stable. The breeder noted the results in a little book and went about his work. In the morning brandy, and in the evening wine, flowed freely.

In Paco's pastures the test was carried out even more minutely and scrupulously. A young bull which could not bear four lances at least was summarily rejected. Paco insisted also on submitting the heifers to the test of the lance and he threw out certain cows of questionable spirit, condemning as too tame many an animal which other raisers would have declared fit for the arena.

"Paco, you will have a first class breed," said Don Antonio, "but it is going to cost you a pretty penny."

"My brand must mean something, Don Antonio," Paco answered in the middle of some brilliant cloak-play. "The pennies will come later, and the applause."

A few days before Palm Sunday they returned to Seville. The sole topic of conversation in the Anda-

lusian capital in Holy Week was the FERIA, the processional *Pasos* or floats, the bulls to be run in the arena, the itinerary of the guilds and the dates and programmes of the bullfights. There was much talk too of the double marriage of Paco and Pastora and Pepe and Rosarito, and of the public penance Pura was to make. The programme of the Spring festival and the collection of *saetas* to be sung that year by Niña de la Cava were on sale in the Calle de las Sierpes. Behind the windows of the clubs, cafés and barber-shops in this famous street, many a good Sevillian sat lounging in a comfortable armchair, watching the crowd pass, discussing the measures adopted by the authorities to assure the success and brilliance of the fiesta. It was a matter of vital concern to great and small alike. Each wished to contribute to it as far as he was able. In the churches a thousand willing hands were busily repairing, redecorating, and regilding the movable platforms, the rich lanterns, and the daïses used for the *Pasos*. Lovingly the women kept the Holy Images and cleaned the marvellous mantles, the delicate lace-work, the magnificent jewels with which they were to be arrayed. Each guild strove to outdo its fellows in pomp and display. Hotel-keepers and tradespeople of all sorts did their part. The churches were furnished in gala array: the shop windows displayed their finest wares; not a living soul but dug deep down into his trunks for the great day. For the forthcoming

Feria, the succession of feast days which follow Holy Week, completing and crowning it, booths and stands rose overnight in the Prado de San Sebastián. The park of Las Delicias was already crowded with smart riders and carriages, coupés with three, four, or even five horses harnessed in Jerez style, with coachmen and footmen dressed in broad-brimmed hats, short coats, colored belts, and leather gaiters: luxurious equipages which the aristocrats, ranchers, and wealthy farmers would presently use to drive through the Feria or to drive to the Arena. The patios, balconies, and windows were heaped with flowers. New hats, new clothes, black mantillas, tortoise-shell combs appeared everywhere. The hotels were overflowing. Caravans of tourists thronged the streets, churches, museums, parks, and cafés, gradually succumbing to the spell of the glamorous city. Some among them went so far as to adopt the moods and manners of the Andalusian. British ladies bought Manilla shawls, their men beak-shaped jack-knives. Romantic legends, glamorous traditions, memories of past grandeur, a mysterious longing to live and to enjoy life permeated the city. Everywhere, on every lip, the sound of heroic names: Velazquez, Murillo, Zurbarán, Ribera, Christopher Columbus, María de Padilla. The dead resuscitated and animated the living. The ghosts of Don Juan and Saint Theresa, the souls of hidalgos, saints and knaves rose from their graves and filled the streets, the cradle

according to the Sevillian, of innumerable glories, a soil that holds deep in its bowels the roots of all valor, all grace.

At last Palm Sunday came; in the afternoon the processions began. Starting from their respective parishes, to a lugubrious rolling of drums, they crossed the Campana, went down the Calle de las Sierpes and assembled inside the Cathedral. Rows of chairs for hire lined the street on either side; for a small sum those who loved their comfort could sit down to watch the *Pasos* as they filed by, resplendent with gold, lights, and gems, and protected, before and behind, by a double row of Nazarenes or mourners, in black, white, violet or sky-blue hoods and masks. These sinister apparitions bore large lighted tapers in their gloved hands, from which, as they advanced solemnly, waxen tears dripped on to the ground. From time to time the Holy Images paused, not so much to allow the invisible lads who carried them to rest as to afford the spectators an opportunity of admiring the superb sculptures of Montañés, Roldán or Ordóñez, the sumptuous pedestals and daïses, the opulent embroidery of the mantles, tunics, and costumes. Then, from the windows and balconies, alive with people swarming like large bees, black against the whitewashed walls, the singing began. A flight of lyrical arrows pierced the air as they sang the *saetas*, those strange saturnine chants which resound like a piercing cry in the night

of the soul, a prolonged lamentation that breaks into a fit of sobbing and ends in arpeggios and trills.

"You seem very sad, Cuenca," said Pura, taking her seat on one of the chairs they had rented at the Campana.

It was an ideal place from which to watch the processions and listen to the wonderful *saetas*. Every year the cafés of the quarter hired the best women singers to attract the public. The *Pasos* paused under the balconies to gladden excited eyes and reap a harvest of prayer. If the Holy Images sometimes failed to arouse a religious emotion, the *saetas* invariably evoked it, especially when they took the form of the *cante hondo*, so utterly expressive of Andalusian feeling. These *saetas* were so modulated as to become a kind of *cante hondo*, sinuous and writhing as a gipsy *seguidilla*. Under this emotional revulsion, the religious spectacle was transformed from carnival to tragedy. Everyone felt, if not the tragedy of Golgotha, at least the tragedy of life, if not the Passion of Christ, at least his own tribulation.

"I am not sad, Pura," Cuenca answered, "but Holy Week, the *Pasos*, the religious ceremonies, the Nazarenos, the faith of the crowd and above all the *saetas* stir up many things in me. The mob's incurable tendency to dramatize its pleasure and pain, and to play with both, explains our manners; the mob is my

brother, an artist delighting in a dream of his own creation. The processions, the bullfights, and the *tablao* are its works of art; in other words, the realization, the pure crystallization of its sorrows and joys. The people believe the dogmas of the church only up to a certain point; but they have a blind faith in the dogmas of their guilds, they are as proud of their guilds' wealth, splendor, and power as though they were their own. The people do not believe in Christ and the Virgin but in their own Christ and their own Virgin. I dare say many of these Nazarenes you see filing by think much as I do when I follow the image of Jesus Our Father of the Great Power. I am not a believer, but I follow gravely, taper in hand, because it is a way of showing my love for my country and of embracing, not so much the religion of my compatriots as its higher aspirations and spiritual energies, of which any faith or belief is a symbol. In what some superficial observers dismiss as a religious carnival, there is a great deal of true religion. Even those who get drunk or who go on a not unlawful spree during these days of mourning are worshipping and repenting . . . after their own fashion. In their case vice, sensuality even, is an act of communion."

That morning and in the early afternoon, they had visited churches and examined the *Pasos* that were to parade through the streets. The painter explained, the dancer listened with unflagging interest, sometimes

asking questions which, from another, would have seemed absurd but which, from her lips, proved highly amusing. There were black circles under her eyes; she seemed paler. Her lifeless eyes revealed the intensity of her grief. She seemed slimmer and more delicate all in black, wearing a lace mantilla and tall tortoise-shell comb. In the churches, men turned from the Holy Images to look at her in amazement. In the street, the Nazarenes nodded their pointed hoods at her and whispered compliments half-religious, half-profane.

“See how pretty the Virgin of the Heather is and how magnificently she moves !” cried Pura, “she is by Montañés, isn’t she ?”

“So they say. According to that curious historian and great lover of bulls, Argote de Medina, the original Virgin was found by a sailor on the beach, half buried in heather. She was brought to the church, and placed on the altar of San Sebastián where she is still worshipped. At the request of a nobleman, she was placed in a chapel which he owned in the church. But the Virgin would miraculously return to the place where the sailor had set her and she was finally left there in deference to her obvious desire. Of the many Virgins carried off by the infidels, she alone returned. That is why the city chose her as its patron.

“Look, Cuenca, look at her well. Heaven knows when we shall see her again.”

The painter had arranged for an exhibition of his work in Paris and had proposed to Pura that she leave with him after the Corridas of the Feria. La Trianera was to dance at the Olympia in May and June. She would create some dances of her own, *seguidillas*, *saetas*, *malagueñas* and *soleares* under the skilful direction of Cuenca, who had designed her settings and who hoped for immense success. The painter had helped her also with the action and mechanics of her numbers, which were to be so many living and colorful pictures. The excitement of the artistic adventures upon which they were embarked dulled the pain of departure. After the season in Paris, Pura was going to North America and Cuenca to Italy where he proposed to spend two or three years.

"Yes, who knows when we'll see another Holy Week together? Never, perhaps."

"What makes you say that, Cuenca? We'll meet here some day. I expect to come back as soon as ever I can. That is why I bought my little house. I want to die in my own country. Don't you?"

"Of course, I do. But after a long separation we shall not be the same. You will change, so shall I. We will never recapture the joy or suffering which have made our hearts beat together. Yet I swear you will always dwell with me in spirit, as close as you are now. You are Seville, the living image of the honey,

salt, and gall of this blessed earth. I shall never think of it without thinking of you."

"I shall not change, Cuenca," the dancer said gravely. "You may be sure of that. Far or near, I shall always be your friend. How can I forget all you have done for me? If I am alive today, it is thanks to you; thanks to you I have become a little bit better. Besides, Cuenca, I need your friendship and support, both as a woman and an artist. I may count on you, may I not? I have grown so used to your guidance; I could not take a step alone now. Paco has promised to write me, and he will, I feel sure. What has been between us can never be forgotten; but he no longer needs me, he will be happy, and in time. . . But with you, Cuenca, it is different! You are as lonely and lost as I am. You have no tree to give you shade. We are in the same boat, old friend, we are partners in pain, and my heart tells me that I can be useful to you, that you need me just a little. Am I wrong?"

The Holy Christ of Love was passing. Its tapers cast a golden halo about Cuenca's saintly, ascetic face. Staring at Montañés' magnificent statue, he replied:

"No, Pura, you are not wrong. Your affection is the dearest thing to me in the world. No one but you has ever loved me really. I have never had a true friendship with women, I have never known real love. Judge then how dear yours is to me! Art

is a great consolation but it is not enough. It is so sad to have no one who *cares* what you do ! How often I have felt that ! How often I have felt lonely and destitute, how often I have wanted to throw away my brushes ! But since I have known you, I have worked with more pleasure. Even if I never see you again, I shall go on painting. You are a *seguidilla*, you shall be my Muse and my friend, if you will, my only friend. I ask nothing more. Only ugly men like myself," he added, looking at her with a rueful smile, "are capable of pure love. We shall be true friends in joy and adversity, in absence and together. . . And now suppose we go to the tavern opposite and sip two little glasses neatly to seal our bargain !"

"Go we will, partners in pain, brother and sister in sorrow !" the dancer answered rising. Without quite knowing why, Cuenca found himself repeating Paco's words: "Poor Rufus, poor, poor, Puriya."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FROM MONDAY till Thursday at daybreak, they visited churches, watched processions, and listened to the singing. Tabardillo, whose love of art and antiquities fitted him to appreciate Cuenca's erudite chatter, joined them; and since, true son of Seville that he was, he liked to laugh and joke, he amused them. Together they walked the streets, choosing the best vantage-points to watch the processions which they knew by heart and to listen to the star singers of *saetas* who sang usually from balconies, while the novices, encouraged by their friends, chanted at street-corners, more to show off their style and win a reputation than through religious devotion. When the Virgin of Refuge, from the church of San Bernardo where so many bullfighters were baptized, passed by, Tabarda, whose patroness she was, could no longer contain himself, and, facing the image ecstatically, opened his mouth to sing. But, for all his efforts, he succeeded only in bellowing, which did not prevent him, however, from gesticulating enthusiastically un-

til the end of the verse. Somewhat shamefaced, he turned to his companion.

"I can't, I can't do it," he said irritably, "no more *saetas* for me. That damned blow did for me, when I attacked the Míguez with the butt of my pike. It cracked my wind and left me wheezy."

"Singing is like painting, Tabarda," Cuenca replied, to console him, "sometimes it is hard to carry off."

"And dancing, too," added Pura, to the same end.

But the picador was sad and sulky all the rest of the day. That evening, on taking leave of her friends, the dancer said:

"I shall not go out tonight. I must fulfil the vow that I made to the Virgin of Hope of Triana, and I want to rest first, to meditate and commune with the little Madonna of Cano."

At last the dawn of Good Friday, the day when the religious emotions of Seville reach their climax, was at hand. The clubs, cafés, taverns, and wine-shops had remained open all night. The huge crowd, which had been roaming the streets, concentrated on the Plaza de San Francisco, in the Campana or in front of the churches which would disgorge their nocturnal processions, the most impressive of all. At the stroke of two, the heavy doors of the parish church of San Lorenzo opened. The huddled multitude standing in the little square, breathless, eager, every eye alight with excitement, peered into the gloom of the temple, a

mysterious background which threw into brilliant relief, like dazzling apparitions on their platforms of gold, silver and candle-light, the Christ of the Great Power and Our Lady of All Sorrows and of Supreme Affliction. The lights of the tapers throbbed like gleaming stars; the torch-flames fluttered like spirits through the shadows. Amid an anxious, awesome silence, the hooded figures marched past, two by two, holding heavy tapers of red wax in their gloved hands, the trains of their tunics draped over their left arms, their bearing lordly and their step majestic. Most of them went barefoot; some wore black stockings; a few, leather shoes with silver buckles. On they came, seeming to bear on the tips of their lighted tapers the subtle flame of a will-o'-the-wisp. When the Redeemer emerged, borne by invisible atlantes, tragic and impressive under the portal of the church, a double row of penitents and will-o'-the-wisps described two fantastic lanes of light on either side of the street. The first *saeta* rose in the air, then a second, a third, countless songs that turned the dim little square into a tourney-field of trills, a cage of nightingales, larks, and canaries. The deep hum of the bassos blended with the arpeggios of shriller registers. The *Paso*, absorbing these lyric tributes and the homage of ecstatic glances, crossed the square, trailed by a squad of old women and girls of the people, with lighted tapers. Behind them, barefoot and clad in long black robes,

Pastora, Rosarito, Paco and Míguez walked humbly. They were fulfilling a vow made by the two girls and Pepe to the Lord of Great Power for Paco's recovery; and the bullfighter had joined them, as a token of gratitude. The crowd recognized him and on all sides hats rose as they did when the Holy Images passed by. The sight of fortune, fame, and beauty humbling themselves before the God of the poor, who bore the weight of all men's sin, touched and electrified the crowd. The drooping figure of the popular idol, in particular, brought tears to all eyes, quickened every heart. Murmurs of assent and admiration alternated with the *saetas*.

"Bravo, bravo," cried a woman, with outstretched hands. "The rich an example of piety to the poor ! The great of the earth suffering as we suffer. Open Thine arms to them, O Lord of the Great Power."

"Look at those girls ! Their feet are like nards, their faces like the Blessed Host," Cuenca whispered to Tabardillo as they watched them pass. And both raised their hands in respect.

"It's the matador they admire though," observed Tabardillo in a low voice. "Look at them staring !"

"The prestige of the bullfighter's pigtail."

Pastora and Rosarito walked in the centre, Paco and Pepe on either side; all four advanced, their glance fixed on the luminous legions of the Lord. Phantoms with pointed hoods and mysterious eyes were still

fling by them, when Our Lady of the Supreme Sorrow, resplendent with lights, pearls, gold, and precious stones, crossed the square and stopped in the street. The neck of the Heavenly Lady drooped under the weight of her sparkling crown. Her breast, her hands and even a portion of her dress were decked with rows of pearls, diamond necklaces, emerald, sapphire and ruby crosses, rings, brooches, and pendants. Velvets and precious materials were lost under golden embroideries and the embroideries in turn under scintillating gems. And all this worldly luxury, this Asiatic pomp delighted rather than displeased the crowd, whose admiration went out towards the splendor and magnificence of the Virgin's apparel rather than towards her countenance. Her whole person glowed like a gem in the sumptuous jewel-box of the dais. And again trills, arpeggios, bravuras rose, melting into a rhythmic confusion. Sonorous shafts of music blended into a vast sunlight of melody. Here and there, those who could not lift up their praise in song, spoke to the Statue. Standing on the curb, a bottle of *Cazalla* strung to his neck, a scandalous little ragamuffin who could barely keep on his feet, stared at her, smiling like a cherub. From those impudent lips poured the tenderest words; his tipsy eyes devoured her with infinite love. Cap in hand, oblivious to his surroundings, he cried to her:

“What a *saeta* I'd sing you this very minute, dear

darling little Mother, if I warn't pickled. How prettily you ride, Mary — O morning star ! the Lord's own lassie, the rose of Paradise ! What can I give you ? Only my drunk, only my jag, little enough, but you're welcome to it ! Good will's a great deal ; God hisself couldn't do better. Oh, but I'm tight — O ! O ! — But I can't do any better. All you can do is try, so they say — eh, I'll wait till the next time ! I do love you, Mary, I do ; don't abandon me, little Mother of my soul, darling little Mother."

When the Virgin had moved on, he was still haranguing her, bowing and scraping, cap in hand. The first Nazarenes had now reached the Campana, but as they formed in the dark church, its shadowy maw continued to disgorge hooded heads. At last the square stood empty, the church silent and dark. The milky light of the moon lay on the roofs like a rain of fuzz. The hum of the *saetas* slowly subsided. Something was flickering and dying in the air. Here and there the houses melted into shadow ; others were blanched like a clown's face.

Threading tortuous alleys, the painter and Tabardillo made their way toward the Pasaje de Oriente. Before pushing to the Campana for the procession of the *Pasos*, they wished to refresh themselves with a fragrant cup of chocolate. The patios were dimly illuminated by small lamps hanging over representations of the Virgin or the Saviour, in sculpture or low relief,

on enamelled plates. Dreamy, somnambulistic patios ! Murmuring jets of water, in the shadowy solitude, made them seem melancholy and voluptuous, though, thanks to the boxed palmettos and pots of geranium and carnations, not depressing. Some of these patios were wide and beautiful, others small and trim; but all breathed an indefinable air of nostalgia and mystery.

The tables were occupied by well-known people and foreigners; they had to wait some time to be served. A night of religious emotion roused all appetites, quickened good humor. Everyone spoke eagerly, and though their faces were drawn, their eyes shone. In a corner, a young gentleman was having some *saetas* sung to him *pianissimo* by a youth of inferior social position, though well dressed. After each verse, the young gentleman raised his hand and threw himself back in his chair: "*Olé !*" he cried and looked at the audience for approbation. The *saetas* were sung in falsetto and seemed to come from a great distance; they echoed plaintively in the Arabic patio of the café.

"It is half-past three. At four, the Lady of Hope of Triana passes the Campana," Cuenca said as they left.

"If she meets the Lady of Hope of the Macarenos, there will be a row. Last year, if you recall, the two ladies went at it tooth and nail, and there were candle-clouts and cracked heads."

"There will be nothing like that this year. The

Governor has taken strict precautions and the guilds have conferred beforehand. La Macarena will pass first — they drew for it — and the Virgin of Triana, wearing all Pura's jewels, will follow. Pura will walk behind, doing her penance. Have you heard ?”

“All Seville knows about it. With her popularity, it *will* be a sight.”

“Poor child !” sighed Cuenca, and, after a moment's silence, he added, “In the afternoon we'll have a look at the Cachorro on the Triana Bridge and hear the women prisoners sing and see the convicts kneel in prayer. The Cachorro reflected in the waters of the river, what a picture, Tabarda ! Then we'll see other *Pasos* and visit other churches. Later will come the bullfights and the various amusements of the Feria. I shall see as many pictures as I can; I want to steep my soul and my brain in Seville today. Ah, Tabardillo, how hard it will be, when I am abroad at this season and no procession or anything else !”

“No — it won't be very amusing !” the other agreed. “I couldn't stand it, I know. But tell me, why do you suppose the Madonnas touch me so much more than the Christs ? Is it because they are women ?”

“Probably,” Cuenca replied with a smile.

With considerable difficulty they reached their chairs in the Campana, by now black with people; a throng of hats, wide-brimmed, of mantillas and of women bare-headed surrounded them. It was a very different

crowd from that which graced the stands in the Plaza de San Francisco. Here the popular heart beat; that was why Cuenca preferred it. La Macarena had already passed with her company of Nazarenos and armed men. The Brotherhood of the Sailors was coming down the Calle de Tetuán. A dull roar caught their ear, like the breaking of the distant surf; it grew as the *Pasos* approached, then there was a storm of confused cries; Cuenca and the picador rose to their feet anxiously.

"Something must be happening !" cried the painter.

At that moment, Salero and Templáito arrived, in great agitation.

"We were looking for you," said the former.

"What is the matter ?"

"Imagine ! Pura is doing penance barefoot and on her knees, between two policemen. I hear she confessed."

"She has accused herself," Templáito added, "at every step she says that it was she who struck the matador and cries out imploring punishment. If you ask me, I think she has gone mad !"

"Good God ! What's that you're saying ?"

The *Paso* turned the corner and stopped in front of the balconies where Niña de la Cava and Mariquita were singing. Under her daïs of velvet and gold, the Virgin of Hope, ablaze from head to foot, wept real tears. The torch-gleams flickered on her azure cloak,

blue as a strip of empyrean. A close throng swarmed behind the platform, gazing at an open space in which the dancer kneeled, moaning, her arms crossed and her head drooping over her breast. She was clad in a white tunic tied at the waist by a hempen cord; her hair flowed loose over her shoulders, gleaming coppery coils covered her face, almost swept the ground. Her dress was torn, revealing her bruised knees and the slope of her amber thigh. She had followed the *Paso* from Triana, dragging herself on her knees as long as she could, and walking when she could bear it no longer. Four policemen, delegated by the Governor to protect her, kept the crowd off. Everyone wished to ease her ordeal, to support her when she fell, to offer her water. Women cried out to her in sympathy and pity. Others stared at her, stunned, or buried their faces in their handkerchiefs. A deep spell held the crowd. Word ran before her, penetrating every corner of the square, scaling the balconies and windows packed with people. Hundreds of spectators, realizing that here was no comedy but rather a poignant drama, climbed on their chairs to contemplate the extraordinary scene. Cuenca, at a loss to account for it, remembered the mysterious words the dancer had spoken one evening when they discussed her forthcoming journey:

"I shall not leave Seville," she had said, "until I have squared my accounts with God and men. I can do this

only by mortifying my flesh. And I shall leave only when I have suffered to the very utmost as punishment for my crime and for Paco's sake."

Suddenly the shrill notes of Niña de la Cava's voice rent the air. The singer had scarcely concluded her stanza, amid noisy applause, when Mariquita launched hers. "More, more!" cried the public, never wearied of hearing *saetas*. And both resumed their singing, vieing with each other in feeling and power. As they ceased, Pura's low wailing voice resounded:

"I struck him! I loved him more than life itself and I struck him down. Paco, my Paco, Paco, my beloved!"

Just as the *Paso* was about to move on again, a man advanced, hat in hand, and planted himself in front of the Virgin. His bright eyes immoderately dilated, his lips quivering, he stared at her rapturously. The light of the tapers gleamed on his thin, sombre, evil face. Deep wrinkles furrowed his cheeks. His kiss-curls grew down to his cheek-bones; two wisps of raven-black hair covered half his narrow knotty brow. It was Pitoche. The crowd recognized him and waited with anxious suspense. The singers leaned over the balcony to listen to him. His fame, the story of his ill-starred love and the presence of Pura under such startling circumstances, made them scent the violent emotions and agonies they unconsciously craved. Pitoche sang as in a dream:

*Weep, little mother, weep,
They nailed your love to the bitter tree.*

His clear, vibrant voice, even in the tremolos and lower tones, filled the Campana. Its shaft of music soared, swift and straight, like a rocket, and burst aloft in a cascade of moans and sobs which floated down slowly to settle on the rapt crowd below. There was no bravura, no *ad lib.*, none of the embellishments of the Italian tenor or Spanish *cantaor*; here were long descending scales of tears, beyond the singer's control, flowing from his lips, now hushed, muffled, now free as a torrent. The notes gushed from his throat and strained painfully, like the sighs escaping from his breast. He moaned rather than sang:

*With his young blood your son
Shall cleanse us of our sins. . .*

Tears bathed his emaciated face; his swollen lips quivered. The vocal strain he underwent, as he sought to express his uttermost anguish, dilated the nerves of his neck and the veins on his temples; he stretched his hands imploringly towards the Virgin or turned them against himself, burying them in his breast as if to rip out the pain that tortured him. In his frenzy, he no longer knew whether he now hymned the Virgin or Pura, whether himself or the Redeemer was nailed to

the bitter tree. He identified the agony of the Mother and Her Son with his own agony and that of the dancer. But his emotion communicated itself to the crowd, exciting it with the sense of his own suffering. Writhing as if in the pangs of labor, he brought forth in a supreme cry the last line of that terrible *saeta*:

Forgive, forgive the heart that has wept !

A delirious clamor broke out from the crowd; few eyes were dry; many were those who burst into strange exclamations and incoherent babbling. El Ñaño and several gipsies tore at their shirts and vests spasmodically, to prove their emotion. The singer, in oblivious ecstasy, stood before the Virgin, with outspread arms, in the pose in which he had finished the stanza.

"He'll drive us all daft—the loon !" Tabarda cried frantically.

"My God, my God !" moaned Salero. Cuenca was silent, his eyes fastened on Pura.

"I struck him, I struck him, and I loved him more than life itself," she repeated over and over. "I ought to be hanged, I ought to be strangled. He has forgiven, but I cannot forgive myself. . ."

The resplendent Image moved on as if walking over the multitude. Rising painfully, the dancer followed it, stumbling at every step. As he saw her pass, so utterly alone and dejected, the painter in his grief

felt his heart fly to her; he alone could console her, she alone could appease his own heart. Slipping off his shoes, he tossed his hat aside and took his place beside her, as though to make a public avowal of his love.

"Pura, it is I! I shall help you bear your cross," he said, taking her hand.

The delirious procession entered the Calle de las Sierpes, the multitude invoking mercy and encouraging the dancer with words of love. Here and there, flowers were tossed to her. The moon still rained down its orange blossoms.

"*Olé!* Here's to the brave painter!" cried a voice, in deadly earnest, to Cuenca.

In front of the Virgin walked the singer with El Ñaño and a group of friends, their shirts and vests in shreds, mad with excitement. As often as the *Paso* halted, Pura fell on her knees. Cuenca, supporting her, kneeled with her. Then Pitoche would sing, alone.

"This will be the death of you, Pitoche," El Ñaño said as he poured him a nip of brandy.

"I hope so, I hope so. It can't come too soon," the singer answered, scowling.

WHEN the procession emerged from the Cathedral to make its way back to Triana, the light of the rising sun filled a light silken sky and the candle-flames flickered listlessly. The gold, the diamonds, and the

velvets of the starry statue had lost their lustre. But the eyes of the crowd, as it implored for mercy in a mighty chorus and sang *saeta* after *saeta*, still flashed with undimmed flame. The procession grew at every step. All Seville knew what was happening behind the statue. Furthermore, it was rumored that the dancer had made a written confession, begging for permission to accomplish her penance before her arrest and that she would be confined in the Women's Prison when the Virgin, in obedience to a time-honored custom, paused at that point to allow the inmates to see her and sing to her. The crowd, insatiable in its quest for sensation, poured from all parts of the town into the street down which the *Paso* moved towards Triana. The zealots of the Lord of the Great Power and even those of La Macarena were leaving the groups which accompanied them from the Cathedral to their respective parishes and swelling the ranks of Our Lady of Hope. The Brotherhood of the Sea was proud of the remarkable triumph of their Virgin. Struggling to hold their lead in the jostling crowd, the Nazarenes whispered: "We've run away with the other *Pasos*, we've carried off all the honors of the night."

Before the Women's Prison, the Virgin paused. The inmates crowded against a wicket in the door to catch sight of the Divine *Señora*. With faces flattened against the glass, they wept hot tears of remorse, love,

worship, and despair. These wretched women made an extraordinary picture, all heads and no bodies, like a cluster of heads severed from the body, each weeping not the death of the Saviour but its own demise. A *saeta* flared from a balcony opposite; another, more racking, from the jail. Mother and daughter were singing together. Then Pitoche vigorously launched his wail, desperately accentuating the power and gloom of his lyrical plaint. By daylight, the gipsy's grief was even more affecting. His tears could be plainly seen, his suffering was manifest to every eye. He seemed to be telling, in a voice of agony, the martyrdom of the Redeemer and his own ordeal. He trembled in every limb. To lengthen his breath, he strained and writhed, drawing the notes out in interminable vocalizations that moaned and sobbed. Suddenly his voice broke and his hands clutched his breast. A gush of black blood poured from his mouth. El Ñaño, Salero, and Templáito caught him in their arms as the frantic multitude tore the dancer from the hands of the police to sweep her away and bear her on their shoulders in triumph.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE VERY day on which the wedding of the “prettiest maids of Seville and the stoutest lads of Spain” was celebrated, amid a great display of Andalusian splendor, Pura and Cuenca boarded the night express for Madrid. On the way to the station, the dancer wished one more glimpse of the city from the top of the Giralda, just as she had seen it with Paco. Leaning on the painter’s arm and mounting the steep stairs, she paused from time to time to rest. Her breath failed her, her legs seemed to crumple like gauze. Yet in spite of her physical exhaustion, she was neither so sad nor so moody as formerly. Her voluntary punishment accomplished, the resultant fever and prostration gradually abated; she enjoyed that state of calm and peace that usually follows a painful operation.

On the last platform, she breathed deep, filling her lungs with the pure air.

“One morning, Cuenca,” she said, looking about, “a morning cool as the first day of creation, I stood on this

very spot with Paco. We had spent the night after my début at the *Tronío* drinking and singing at Mother Curra's. We were happy, we felt we were going to love each other heart and soul. That was a year, only a year, ago. How much has happened since ! . . . I often wonder whether I am not the victim of an evil dream. I fell a prey to the charm of this city where Paco says everyone is bewitched, everything an enchantment. Standing here and looking down on Seville, there, opening out its arms before us, in our enthusiasm, we vowed to conquer it, to rouse it, to rob it of the pall that stifles its desires and feelings, he with his art, I with mine. I remember his words as clearly as if I were listening to them now. What ecstasy ! What enthusiasm ! Pointing to the arena where he was soon by prodigies of valor to prove himself supreme, he said things I shall never forget. In short we swore to love nobly and dare all. Well, we dared all, as we swore; we fell madly in love. And now I am leaving, joyless, broken-hearted, with spent eyes; I feel like a blind woman walking forward I know not where ! Ah, Cuenca, everything is over !" she added with a deep sigh.

The painter, with a sad glance, answered evenly: "No, Pura, don't say that. A flame burns in your soul that was not there before; it will reveal things to you, innumerable things, to which you were blind; it will bring you ineffable joys. What you have suf-

ferred, Pura, will never be lost either to your art, to your life, or to others. Meanwhile, four people owe you their happiness; they know it and are profoundly grateful. But for you, Paco would not be the great man he is today; he realizes it and loves you the more for it. His love for Rosarito or Pastora may wane, but never his love for you. You are his inspiration ! On Easter Sunday, after the bullfight, when his technique showed that the day of harlequinades was over and that of tragic sport had begun — subjective, transcendental sport, if I may call it so — he came over to the barrier for his coat, and said to me; “Rufus, my boy, this is the most overwhelming ovation I have ever had: I owe it entirely to Puriya. But for that woman, I should never think and act as I do today, when I face the bulls. She made me lust for glory, she taught me to fight bulls by obeying the instincts of my race. She has been, she will always be my Muse.”

“Yes. He would tell me I was a magician, too, sometimes !”

“You are ! Not to him only, but to every artist in Andalusia. You have revealed or suggested a host of ideas to us. No, Pura, no, all is not over; a new life is beginning for you.”

“But a joyless life, Cuenca,” she said.

“The joy you mean is not the only one to wish for. A woman like you must be able to forego it, if need

be, in order to reach nobler, more lasting heights. You give joy to others; that will be your joy. You came here, alone, without kith or kin. Today, you have kin, and many, more than you know. We all love you; all Seville adores you."

Closing her eyes, she said:

"I don't know if that is true, Cuenca. All I know is that in spite of everyone's kindness, in spite of Paco's affection and yours, I feel disconsolate. I came to Seville, hoping to steep myself in the life of my country, to realize what I already had felt half instinctively. I am leaving it, alas, after steeping myself . . . in Paco's blood, in the blood of Pitoche, in my own blood. Poor Pitoche ! God pardon the wrong I did him unwillingly ! This morning I covered his grave with flowers. It's a humble, small grave, Cuenca. Poor fellow ! Those will be his last flowers, until I return. He will be lonely — lonelier than we."

"Lonely, but dead. The loneliness of the living is more bitter."

The dancer sighed again:

"Cuenca, life is a sorry thing."

"But also a divine thing, Pura ! Especially when men may turn sorrow into beauty, poverty and ugliness into splendor and grace."

"But at bottom, Cuenca, are you quite sure that it is not all an illusion, a lie, a jest, an artist's fancy ?

Why are we born? Why do we live? Who can tell?"

"I can't!" Cuenca replied with a laugh. "We have been put into the world to create illusions and live by them. They are the deepest realities."

"Illusions? But they cheat us."

"Yes, but they always charm us, and when they die, it is because a new spell is to rise from their ashes. In Seville, where blood runs riot in men's veins and pulses through their brains, the spell is more potent, more general and more visible than elsewhere. We are all artists; we all create illusions, we all live in dreams. And the power to dream is a gift from heaven. The man who is liberally endowed with that faculty bears within him a fount of supreme ecstasy."

Gazing into the distance, Pura said:

"Are you happy, Cuenca?"

The painter hesitated; then shrugging his shoulders, with affected indifference: "Yes," he answered, "when I am painting."

Feeling that she too was happy when she danced, La Trianera nodded:

"Partners in pain, brother and sister in sorrow. . ."

They were silent. Each stared hungrily at the city as if to grip it in the claws of the brain and to squeeze the blood from its veins. Far away, they saw Coria, Gelves, San Juan de Aznalfarache, Castilleja de la

Cuesta, Camas, Santiponce; and nearer, the Hall of Records, the Tobacco Factory and the Bridge of Triana outlined against a sky of gold. Paco's words, which she had so often repeated, recurred to her mind. They slipped from her heart like a prayer, they stirred the sweet lees and the bitter gall, too, of her love — her mad love, which, he had vowed, must be the most wonderful in the world, since it was one with the golden-toned wines, the flaming carnations and the gore of the bull-rings of Andalusia. "A glad land and a sad; a land of incomparable charms and sordid realities. What marvels! What memories! O city of sultans and kings, of *conquistadores* . . . city of saint and *torero*, abloom with carnations, home of the *Pasos*, cradle of *manzanilla*, of the *tangos* and *soleares*, home of Don Pedro, Don Juan. . . Here Christopher Columbus prayed, here Fernando Cortés died. Guzmán the Good is buried yonder and here it was that Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*, and here Saint Theresa lived. Long live all good things and huzzah for glory! In Seville all its witchery, enchantment, and wonder. A bandit dies, and behold! the sculptor Gijón uses him as model for a wonderful Christ. The girls brighten their balconies with bird-cages and flowers and in a trice as though by magic the wretchedness of the town is transmuted to joy. Golden wines turn cares into gaiety, tears into songs, songs into tears. Yes, everything here is magic and wizardry: the sun,

the enchanted streets, the dreamy patios . . . the plaintive songs, the tragic processions, the theatre, wonder of wonders . . . generous earth, where the red carnations of passion and grace flower all year round. And the greatest of all magic circles is the arena, the Plaza de Toros, the divine ring. Its yellow sands glow like a luminous topaz. This topaz is a crucible where all the qualities of our race are mixed, molten and flawlessly modelled; a mysterious, a magical mirror where we Spaniards contemplate ourselves such as we would wish to be, such as the great *conquistadores* and missionaries were."

And gazing rapturously at the arena, she murmured:

"There I saw him play with death showing a whole nation the beauty of valor. He saw me interpret on the stage what we are, what we would be. We went mad, the pair of us; we intoxicated Seville with its own soul."

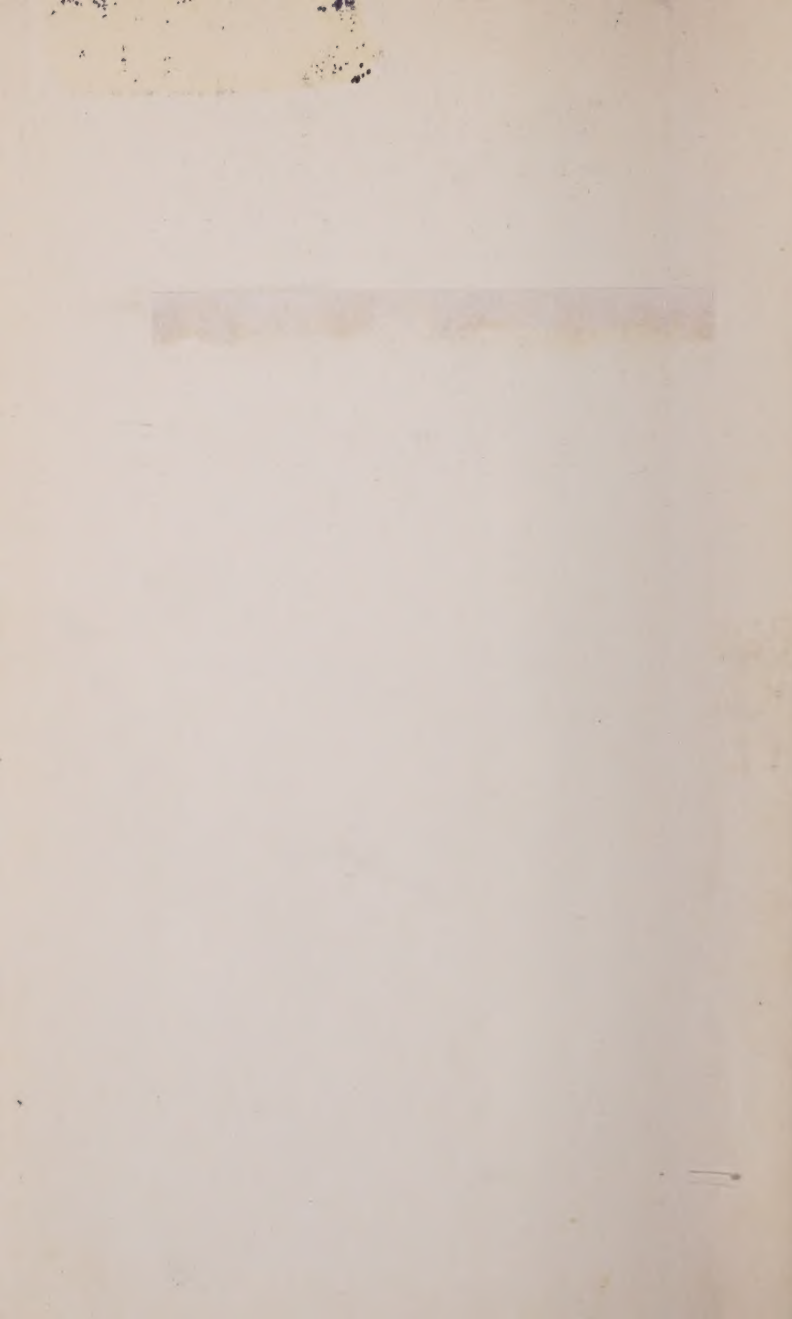
Cuenca, looking at his watch, said:

"It is late, Pura. Come along; we must go now. Farewell Seville, adios, *Sevilla de mi alma!*"

"Yes, let us go," said the dancer.

And, doubtless thinking of all the wonders of the enchanted city, in a voice vibrant with tenderness and reproach:

"Seville," she cried, "Seville!"





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